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OCTOBER 1997

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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 102

OCTOBER 1997

No. 10

Divine Wisdom

THE BHAGAVAN AS THE ONE GOAL OF ALL ASPIRANTS

(Sage Kapila to his mother Devahūti)

तस्मात्त्वं सर्वभावेन भजस्व परमेष्ठिनम्।
तद्गुणाश्रयया भक्त्या भजनीयपदाम्बुजम्॥

Therefore, O Mother, cultivate devotion, which is engendered by contemplating the attributes of the Lord and practise complete resignation to Him.

वासुदेवे भगवति भक्तियोगः प्रयोजितः।
जनयत्याशु वैराग्यं ज्ञानं यद्ब्रह्मदर्शनम्॥

Practice of devotion to Vāsudeva generates the spirit of renunciation very soon and also knowledge and experience of Brahman.

यदास्य चित्तमर्थेषु समेष्विन्द्रियवृत्तिभिः।
न विगृह्णाति वैषम्यं प्रियमप्रियमित्युत॥

स तदैवात्मनाऽऽत्मानं निःसङ्गं समदर्शनम्।
हेयोपादेयरहितमारूढं पदमीक्षते॥

ज्ञानमात्रं परं ब्रह्म परमात्मेश्वरः पुमान्।
दृश्यादिभिः पृथग्भावैर्भगवानेक ईयते॥

When a man ceases to distinguish objects, which are really neutral in their value, as desirable and undesirable, according to the estimate of his senses—then he experiences that supreme state of the Atman who is unattached, equal to all, and beyond acceptance and rejection. It is only the Bhagavan, the Pure Consciousness, who is variously called *Parabrahman*, *Paramātmā*, *Para-meśvara* and *Puruṣa*, who has manifested Himself as the world of objects, the individual seers in it and the instruments through which they see.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 3.32.22–26

Human Woe - II

Now started another phase in the life of Swami Akhandananda which can be described correctly as the 'Service of God in Man'. We shall see, in two issues of this journal, how the tender heart of the Swami, already moved by the woes of Man, saw some shining exemplars in the field of service of God in Man by the will of Providence. We observe that side by side with callousness to the service of the afflicted, these shining examples, which were not foreign to India, existed and shone like the bright sun. We shall see how Swami Akhandananda conducted famine relief in Murshidabad which finally led him to bring into existence an orphanage. In the following pages we shall see how all that was needed to bring into existence the future Ramakrishna Mission lay within the shores of the country—living gods in distress, the feeling heart of the Divinely inspired, the selfless sacrifice that such service demands, and men and women with a large heart to dedicate themselves to a noble cause in every possible way.

June 1892 saw the Swami Akhandananda at Jamnagar as the guest of Kaviraj Manisankar Vithalji. It being the time of the *Cāturmāsya* (the four months of the rainy season during which monks normally do not wander about), Swami Akhandananda decided to stay at the home, 'Dhanvantari Dham', of his host and set himself to reading the *Caraka-Suśruta Saṁhitā*. Attached to the Kaviraj's house was a Sanskrit school where poor students, who lived on one meal a day of rice got by begging from door to door, recited the Vedas with an intonation that delighted the Swami. The Swami is remembered for his writing to Pramada Babu of

Varanasi whose generous help made it possible to open a free store for the students.

Besides this small effort, the interaction between the Swami and his host Manisankarji became so deep that Manisankarji began to transform into a better man. It cannot be imagined, though true, that Manisankarji's aged mother had none to look after her! It is in Indian blood to look upon one's mother and father as Gods embodied. The Swami with a sad heart asked Manisankar why he did not care for his mother? He advised his host to make reverential salutations to his mother daily by bowing down to her and presenting her with some amount of money, and to take care of her in every possible way. This injunction of the Swami, his host followed to the delight of the old lady though it hurt the other members of the family.

Being drawn to the personality of the Swami, Manisankar began to take him out in his carriage in the afternoon. This aroused jealousy in Manisankar's nephews; perhaps, there was also a fear that monetarily they would stand to lose under the self-sacrificing advice of the Swami. Later events justified these fears when one day Manisankar, desiring that the Swami should stay with him permanently, proposed that he would write to Swami Brahmananda, the President of the monastery, for permission in this regard and that he would go to the extent of building a shrine for Sri Ramakrishna with all necessary arrangements for daily worship and adoration. Though Swami Akhandananda felt uneasy at the proposal, being inclined to enjoying the charm of a wandering life, he yielded when he found his host groaning with fever on the day he

proposed to leave his host. Scanting trouble that might arise because of the stay of the Swami, the relatives of Manisankar, it is told, conspired to poison the Swami by adding *jaipal* seeds in his drink. Though the Swami was disinclined to believe this, Jhandu Bhatt Vitthalji, the physician who attended on him every time he fell sick after drinking coffee, told him:

Sethji (Manisankar) not only went to you for advice, but he also spent whatever he could on you gladly. Besides, there was his proposal to build a temple. Therefore, an attempt was made to remove you altogether from this world.

Truly, there is nothing that the lure of the gold coin cannot do.

Jhandu Bhatt Vitthalji led an ideal life, a discussion of which is also the reason for our going through the above episode. A picture of Bhattji, in the words of Swami Akhandananda, is as follows:

Bhattji's house was more like a hospital. It was full of patients suffering from various ailments, for whom Bhattji provided both treatment and diet.

He rose at four in the morning, and when he came out after worship, people began to arrive in groups to have their tea and get their prescriptions. His medicines were free to rich and poor alike, and these even included costly items like Makaradhvaja, an Āyurvedic specific. After filling prescriptions, he drove out in tom-tom (horse-driven carriage) to visit his patients free of charge.

Can any one deny that Bhattji's life represented an ideal which our students of the present day should emulate? That such an example existed in India even at one point of time, is proof enough that the world has in it the potentiality to bring into existence

such persons at every point of time in the future, that the past had in its long unwritten history accounts of many who were shining examples of total dedication—silent workers and an inspiration to all.

That is not all of Bhattji. One day returning from a morning walk, Swami Akhandananda was surprised at the sight which presented itself at the house of Bhattji. An uncouth-looking person, suffering from a skin infection all over his body, lay on Bhattji's own bed, and a woman was massaging the man with oil. Bhattji was sitting nearby and slowly turning the pages of an Āyurvedic treatise. Asked by the Swami, what all that meant, Bhattji told him:

The fellow had been a slave to inordinate sexual indulgence. The Āyurveda prescribes that such a person should lie on a soft bed before a physician, while being massaged with oil by a woman. I have followed the instructions, and am now searching for the medicine.

'But why on your bed?' asked the Swami, only to be told, 'Because it would take time to get a soft bed ready for him.'

Can the reader gauge in this action the tremendous faith the physician had in the scripture that formed the basis of his practice? Can one fail to notice in Bhattji's service of the sick his sympathy and total sacrifice? Truly Bhattji, then seventy years old, was guided by the unfailing wisdom that was clothed in the words of Rantideva (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, 9.21.1-18), uttered often by himself:

*Na kāmāye'ham gatimiśvarātparām
aṣṭarddhiyuktāmapunarbhavaṁ vā;
Ārtim prapadye'khiladehabhājām
antahsthito yena bhavantyaduḥkhāḥ*
—9.21.12.

I do not pray to the Lord for a state in

which I shall be endowed with the eight-fold powers, nor even for the state of liberation from the cycle of birth and death. I desire only to abide within all beings and undergo the suffering that accrue to them. By my taking over their sufferings, they will be free from misery.

Another verse which touched Bhattji deeply was:

*Na tvaham kāmāye rājyaṁ,
na svargaṁ, nāpunarbhavam;
Kāmāye duḥkhataptānām
prāṇināmārtināśanam.*

I covet not any earthly kingdom, nor heaven, nor even salvation. The only thing I desire is the removal of the miseries of the afflicted.

Swami Akhandananda was deeply touched. He used to say, taking lessons from that high-souled Bhattji, 'Serving and loving man is the highest good. This I have learned especially by seeing it practised in Bhattji's life.'

Swami Akhandananda's wanderings after this inspiring encounter took him to Pune where he received a letter from Swami Brahmananda to meet him at Abu. At Abu Swami Akhandananda met both Swami Brahmananda and Swami Turiyananda. It was at this encounter that to the impact of the experience from the blazing life of Bhattji was joined the inspiring words of Swami Brahmananda conveying Swami Vivekananda's feeling of agony:

In his travels in western India, Swamiji often shed tears seeing the misery of the common people under the tyranny of the rich. He would say, 'Brother, the people here are too poor to receive your religious teachings. I shall preach religion to them when I have removed their distress. Therefore, I'm going to the

land of Kubera, the god of wealth (meaning the West), to see if I can raise some money for them.

The charming memory of the Himalayas were to him no more so captivating as his bold challenge to God in his determined fight to efface misery from the people of the land of his birth. What was he, a poor monk, to do? For about eight months Swami Akhandananda toured the villages of Rajputana, seeing the condition of the people, and in his letter to the Raja of Khetri he described how the rich landlords extracted their wealth from the toil of the poor peasants and enclosed a pamphlet, 'The Duty of a Ruler to His Subjects'. He also went to Khetri and wrote therefrom to Swamiji, then in America, wanting to know whether his vow to remove the distress of the poor was proper or not. What disquiet was brought on him by the sting of the woes of man is best described in the words of Swami Akhandananda:

The sight of a handful of rich people squandering the hard-earned money of millions of their less fortunate brothers has deprived me of peace and happiness for the rest of my life. I have fully realized that it is *vain* for me to hope for peace of mind, until the misery and distress of my country is removed. I had expected that since I was a *sannyasin* I would easily attain such peace, but this hope has vanished like a dream. My life became full of disquiet and sorrow when I saw the abject conditions under which the people of India were living—that India which was once the home of charity and *dharma*. My dream of a happy life was broken for ever.

The revelation of the society in all its cruelty deprived him of inner peace. How deep was this feeling can well be imagined from his inner thoughts:

I had determined that unless Swamiji wrote me an encouraging reply, I would leave this country for good. The state of my mind was such that it was impossible for me to remain in the country without doing something for it.

All he understood was that the cause of all evil was inequality. He said:

This evil has come about only because of social inequality. *As in the spiritual world all evil arises after the idea of duality, so in society evil arises after the acceptance of inequality. From the idea of difference comes the sense of 'high' and 'low', and unequal treatment.* This idea of 'difference' is the root of all evil.

One can see in this observation, the two-fold attack that was needed: On the spiritual plane, the dissemination of the message of Vedanta, the Unity of existence; and, on the social plane, providing equal opportunities for all. However, Swami Akhandananda laid primary emphasis on the need for improving the condition of the people so that their basic needs were provided. In this stand he seemed to echo his Master's thoughts: 'Religion is not for empty stomachs.' Food, clothing and shelter first, and religion thereafter.

In determining the priority between striving for one's own salvation and the removal of the distress of the people around him, Swami Akhandananda was a revolutionary monk. A sannyasin of the new age that he was, he was willing to forgo his own salvation for the sake of serving his countrymen. Indeed, only such lives could have kindled other lives to plunge into the task of freeing India from foreign yoke and making her rise to her past glory. Truly, what India and indeed the whole world wants today is to meditate silently on the heart of such great souls.

Even as he was waiting for Swami

Vivekananda's mandate, he silently cast his subtle influence on the Raja of Khetri. Such apparently small details that had great impact on one's life were brought to the attention of the Raja. He would tell the Raja, 'The Goddess of Fortune forsakes even her husband, if he wears shabby clothes, does not clean his teeth, eats too much, uses harsh words, or lies in bed when the sun rises or sets.' This was enough for the Raja to change his old habit of rising late in the morning. His pointed words to a courtier, 'What do you mean? Even eighty years of study is not enough to enable a *sannyasin* to master Vedanta! And your Raja has mastered it even though he is immersed in sport and fun? If you had said he knew nothing, he might have felt abashed and made an attempt to learn something', led to a series of discourses on Vedanta in the Raja's court.

An interesting incident took place at Udaipur where Swami Akhandananda stayed at Pālā Ganeśji's temple and lived on alms. Any money offered to him, he directed that it be given to a *brahmacharin* who was the keeper of the temple. One day, the nephew of the Chief Minister of Udaipur whom the Swami had met on his travel by train to Udaipur, sent him a big parcel, as a result of which the *brahmacharin* began to bestow attention of the Swami. Obviously, the eyes of the *brahmachari* were set on material prosperity, and the Swami was rooted in the Self which manifested Itself in various forms. His concern was for the poor folk who 'used to hide their grain in the earth to keep it from falling into the hands of the Maharana or his agents'.

On one occasion, the Maharana's Chief Priest made a list of all the monks so that they may be given alms by the Maharana. The *brahmacharin* desired that Swami Akhandananda tell him that there were eight of them so that they may get more alms. Swami Akhandananda could not give a false figure; rather, he said:

If there is no one hungry among the children of the Maharana, and if he comes personally to offer me alms, I might oblige him by accepting the alms.

When the Chief Priest expressed his surprise by asking him, 'Maharana's children hungry! What are you talking about?' Swami Akhandananda clarified his remark:

I am aware that the Maharana has only one child who is well looked after and well fed.... The Maharana has about eighteen lacs of subjects. If all of them are satisfied, and no one is hungry, then I will accept that there is none hungry among his children.

Such a bold stand brought the wrath of the Maharana on the Swami. It also displeased the *brahmacharin*. But the Sannyasin in Swami Akhandananda was unmoved even during days of great difficulty that followed this frank utterance. The Swami remembered a generous offer made by one Hari Singh Ludkhani of Jaipur and on writing to him, he obtained the much-needed help to get out of the difficult situation.

Swami Akhandananda at this time received the much-awaited letter¹ from Swami Vivekananda encouraging him in his work with the words:

Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects.... Go to other villages from time to time, and teach the people the arts of life as well as religion. Work, worship, and Jnana (knowledge)—first work, and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be

fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of in the sacred fire.... move from door to door of the poor and the destitute in every village of Rajputana.... The Gerua robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind, and speech to 'the welfare of the world'. You have read—'Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God'—but I say 'The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God.' Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

Receiving this mandate from his beloved leader, Swami Akhandananda set himself to work in right earnest. He went to Khetri as directed by Swamiji, and finding that the Entrance School managed by the Government had only eight students on its rolls, he went from house to house in Khetri explaining to the people the utility of education. He thus succeeded in enrolling two hundred students! The Swami came across five hundred families of slaves called 'Gola' during his rounds and, on the sacred *Rakṣābandhan* day, he requested the Raja of Khetri to give the boys of these slaves the benefit of education so that they might be of better use to the Raja. The Raja agreed readily. However, if the boys worked rather than went to the school they would be earning some money for the family. The Raja agreed also to give grants to the families of the boys so that the income factor may not stand in the way of the boys attending the school. This meant benefit to fifty or sixty boys and their families. However, the permission granted readily was as readily withdrawn on the advice of an officer of the Raja. This hurt the Swami deeply and with tears in his eyes he pleaded before the Raja refusing to take food or drink until the order was passed again. The Swami also arranged for qualified teachers. This was just the beginning of

(continued on page 684)

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama), 1989, vol. 6, p.288; letter dated March/April 1894.

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the August 1997 issue)

तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः
सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम्।
पुमान् रेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां
बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषात्संप्रसूता॥
*Tasmād-agniḥ samidho yasya sūryaḥ
somāt-parjanya osadhayaḥ pṛthivyām;
Pumān retah siñcati yoṣitāyām
bahvīḥ prajāḥ puruṣāt-sam-
prasūtāḥ. (II.i.5)*

From Him proceeds the fire (i.e., heaven) whose fuel is the sun. From the moon (soma), cloud (rain); and (from the cloud) the herbs on the earth. The male pours seeds (semen) into the female. Many creatures are produced from the Puruṣa.

The teacher does not ignore the topics which trouble every student, but brings them up to direct the mind to the underlying Reality. The source of all beings is mentioned as the Person (*Puruṣa*) in the last line of the verse. The scientists of today say that energy is the essence. In the Upaniṣads fire is the symbol of energy. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* gives the *pañcāgni vidyā*, starting from the creation of fire by the Divine (*Puruṣa*) to the creation of other fires. We are taken from the creation of the material world to the creation of biological entities. From the first energy form (fire) fuelled by the sun has come diversification into four lower levels of energy—moon, cloud, earth and procreation. From the energy of the moon is produced cloud, etc. The suggestion is that heat leads to the evaporation of water to form clouds, which comes down as rain on earth and produces humid heat, vegetation, crops. Creatures eat these crops and

become strong and healthy. Thus living beings are born and creation perpetrates. That *pañcāgni vidyā* is mentioned here cursorily.

That Absolute *Akṣara Puruṣa* gives birth to the whole solar system. The production of the five grades of energy is symphonic, coordinated and coherent. These which we are used to are presented here as stages in the creation of the world. Hair splitting arguments and analysis regarding the cosmos, *pañcī-karaṇa* (intermixing of five elements), *pañca-mahā-bhūta* (five basic elements), *sṛṣṭi*, *sthiti*, *pralaya* are all given in the Upaniṣads to make us understand how the Absolute which is pure consciousness becomes the gross world. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the whole *Brahmāṇḍa* is *caitanyamaya*, nothing is gross or material. He just touched the sceptical Narendranath to show to him that everything he saw was consciousness. Finally, after three days, when Narendranath appealed to him, Sri Ramakrishna put him back in the normal state of consciousness. So, what the Upaniṣads said thousands of years ago, viz., that the whole universe is *caitanya*, was verified and validated by the experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and Narendranath.

तस्मादृचः साम यजूंषि दीक्षा
यज्ञाश्च सर्वे क्रतवो दक्षिणाश्च।
संवत्सरश्च यजमानश्च लोकाः
सोमो यत्र पवते यत्र सूर्यः॥

*Tasmād-ṛcaḥ sāma yajūṃṣi dīkṣā
yajñāśca sarve kratavo dakṣiṇāśca;
Santvatsaraśca yajamānaśca lokāḥ
somo yatra pavate yatra sūryaḥ. (II.i.6)*

From Him (emerge) the Rk verses, the

Sāma (chants), the Yajur (sacrificial formulas), initiation rites and all the sacrifices, ceremonials (whether with or without the sacrificial stake), sacrificial gift (offering to the brahmanas), the year, the sacrificer, and the worlds where the moon sanctifies (shines brightly) and where the sun (shines):

From the start of the second Muṇḍaka, we have been told that the Absolute as the *divya amūrta Puruṣa* is the Source from which the whole cosmos has originated. First creation is explained. Then we are told the dicta to guide our life's activities. Next the weather cycle of the world, and all else that are relevant to human life is mentioned in the successive *mantras*. After describing the material and biological creation, the teacher describes the domain of ideas and deeds—intellectual, emotional and volitional—which are also spoken of as derived from that original Source. This means that everything has a spiritual basis if approached with a correct perspective. That is why deliberately the Vedas as also the disciplines one has to undergo to reach the Truth of the Vedas are mentioned as emanating from the Reality. Earlier the teacher had mentioned that the Vedas are *aparā-vidyā*. Now he says that they are created out of that Reality. The entire *karma-kāṇḍa* and its rewards have no independent existence. The *yajñas* in which no animal sacrifice takes place and the *kratu* which involve animal sacrifices, as well as the giving away of gifts are the obligations enjoined upon us. It means that we expand ourself by giving away all we have acquired. The *yajamāna* or the sacrificer performs all the karma throughout the year and earns the *lokas* or positions by these performances. The worlds are literally many—*bhū-loka*, *deva-loka*, *svarga-loka*, *candra-loka*, *sūrya-loka*, *rudra-loka*, etc.—but in reality it refers to the state of the mind a man can attain to if he performs actions according to the dictates of his pure conscience: he feels elated and happy

and such is the *loka* earned by one's act of self-restraint. In that *loka* the moon blesses his existence and the sun gives him sustenance by its heat. In every *mantra* is found the idea: *etasmāt jāyate*, from That everything is manifested and in It everything exists. Thus, gradually the different *aparā-vidyā* are being coalesced into *parā-vidyā viśaya*.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that there were many doors to enter into a house, the main entrance, the servants' entrance, the janitor's entrance, etc. Similarly, there are many doors to enter into the domain of *parā-vidyā* experience, i.e., all the branches of *aparā-vidyā* like *saṅgīta*, *nṛtya*, *nāṭya śāstras* (sciences of song, dance, drama, etc.) can serve as *mukti śāstra* provided one has educated oneself to believe that every *vidyā* is a formulation of *parā-vidyā*. Even grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), an apparently dry subject, deals with word (*śabda*) which has an inherent power (*śakti*). We hear good news and jump with joy, or we hear sad news and we weep and wail. In Bhojaraj's *Śabda-śakti-prakāśikā* and *Vākya-padārtha*, it is said that as Brahman's *Śakti* has manifested the whole world, so *Omkāra* with its modulations has the *Śabda-śakti* which can express and make known Brahman. So, even *vyākaraṇa* has been raised into *mukti-śāstra*. Once Sri Ramakrishna went to an exhibition of dolls depicting Krishna *līlā*. He went into ecstasy and said that all the figures depicting different events in the life of Sri Krishna are but made of wax. The *lakṣyārtha* (implied meaning) of the Upaniṣads is that each branch of knowledge is to be looked upon as revealing ultimately '*sarvam khalu idam brahma*'. This explains the apparent deviation from the main theme of the *mantra* explaining *sr̥ṣṭi-tattva*. So anything that appeals in these teachings can be transformed into *mukti-śāstra*.

तस्माच्च देवा बहुधा संप्रसूताः

साध्या मनुष्याः पशवो वयांसि।

प्राणापानौ ब्रीहियवौ तपश्च

श्रद्धा सत्यं ब्रह्मचर्यं विधिश्च॥

(continued on page 689)

Vision and the Mission

SWAMI ATMAVIDANANDA

A vast stretch of land in Bihar, where a mystic stillness pervades the air and grips any newcomer making him feel that he has been transported to another land free from the least trace of worldly cares and anxieties: such is the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Ranchi, Morabadi. From morning till nightfall, tribal students are trained within the campus in a variety of skill areas and field-works conducted and/or supervised by an untiring team of devoted personnel. This ongoing niṣkāma karma and the years of tapasya of the founder-secretary have gone into making the institution what it is today—a cynosure for all eyes, a blessing to the people residing in the area, and an example for other institutions, as this concise report reveals.

Swami Atmavidananda, the erstwhile Secretary of the Ashrama and presently in charge of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Kishanpur, in preparing this report for Prabuddha Bharata, has correctly pinpointed that, the 'story of Mangraj is but one among the numerous episodes of success, hope and sustenance....When we look for the motivation and the inspiration that is working behind the projects, we find that every work undertaken by the Mission has been laid out in great detail by Swami Vivekananda himself who had a prophetic vision and a clear understanding of the method for the regeneration of our motherland.'

Mangraj Toppo, a tribal youth from a backward tribal hamlet—Ghagra Tikra Toli of Ranchi district in Bihar (India)—, is one among the 8-member family. Because of the economic compulsions in this part of the country, village children join their parents in field work; and Mangraj was no exception. Upon the sudden demise of his father, young Mangraj found no alternative other than to discontinue his studies and devote full time to help his elder brother in agricultural activity for sustaining the family. As luck would have it, Mangraj came across a copy of *Divyayan Samachar*, the monthly newsletter for farmers published by the Ramakrishna Mission Centre in Ranchi (Bihar), wherefrom he learnt about the facility for free training in agriculture and allied subjects provided by the Ramakrishna Mission. This very encouraging news, he felt, had a ray of hope for the eradication of his family's poverty. Mangraj was elated at the idea of receiving free training which would

enable him to maximize his farm produce. He joined the composite training programme at Divyayan which is practical-oriented with sound hands-on experience. After completing his training, Mangraj dedicated himself to improving his agricultural production and also ventured into maintaining a backyard poultry farm. Gradually, he was able to collect the seed money required for acquiring bee-boxes, bee colonies, etc. Under a subsidy scheme arranged by the Mission, he joined the programme to introduce beekeeping in his village. That was in 1987.

Through various vicissitudes his endeavours in beekeeping progressed by dint of steadfastness and the continued follow-up by Divyayan. These helped him to achieve an extremely good performance in beekeeping. Today he earns a substantial income of Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 35,000 per year solely from his beekeeping enterprise, with

additional income from agriculture etc. Poverty of the family has gradually been mitigated. Till now, through his singular efforts he has motivated another 20 families of his village to adopt beekeeping as a low-investment enterprise. At present, all the benefited farmers are earning substantial amounts from beekeeping. Experience has given confidence to Mangraj to become a trainer on behalf of Divyayan in its Village Extension Programmes. A small lamp (Mangraj) has now grown into a brilliant and soothing flame illuminating the entire area with prospect and promise. Though Mangraj himself could not obtain good academic education, he has helped his brothers and sisters to pursue their studies and reach postgraduate level. Youths of the village under his leadership have motivated other villagers to desist from consumption of country liquor which is a compulsive habit with tribals. With enough employment opportunity in the village itself, the migration of village youths to cities during the lean season in search of a means for livelihood has stopped. Ghagra Tikra Toli has joined the list of villages being benefited by the Ramakrishna Mission, ushering a new era of economic, social and spiritual uplift.

The above story of Mangraj is but one among the numerous episodes of success, hope and sustenance. This phenomenal progress has resulted from the silent yet effective work done by 'Divyayan' (meaning Divine Way) at Ranchi. When we look for the motivation and the inspiration that is working behind the projects, we find that every work undertaken by the Mission has been laid out in great detail by Swami Vivekananda himself who had a prophetic vision and a clear understanding of the method for the regeneration of our motherland.

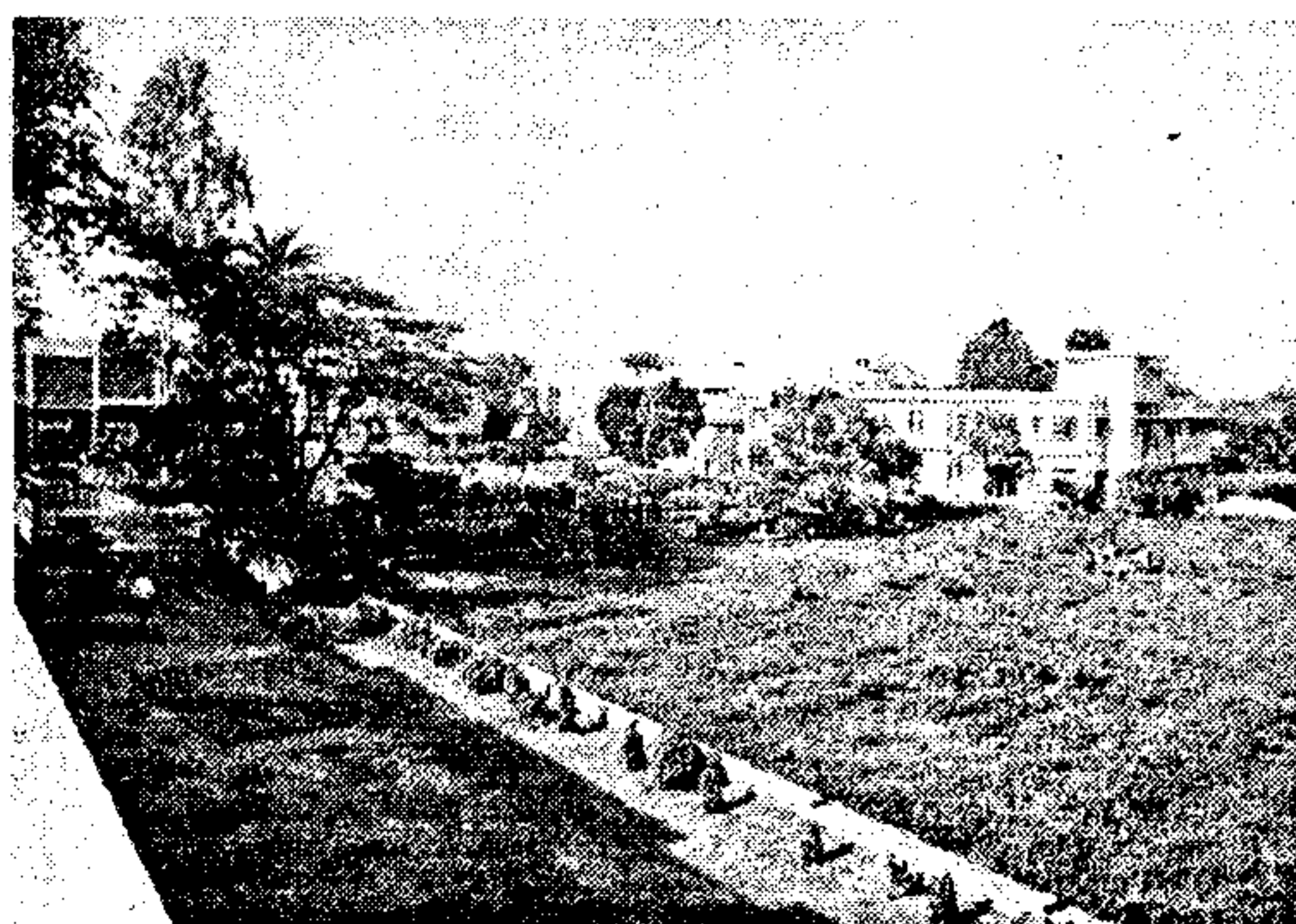
From the following conversation a disciple had with Swamiji, we find that Swamiji had chalked out a plan for the country's

agricultural development and had specified the qualities essential for an agricultural extension worker.

Swamiji: ...Personally, I feel that there is no harm if anyone makes agriculture his profession; but if you advise anyone to do so, he retorts, 'Then why have I gone in for so much education? Is it necessary for everyone in the country to be farmers? The nation is already full of them; that is why it has come to such ruin.' But this is not so. Read the *Mahabharata*. The sage Janaka held the plough in one hand and studied the Vedas using the other. Our sages of old were farmers. Not only that: look how America has become so advanced by developing agriculture. I do not mean that we should follow this profession as the ignorant farmers of our country do. We have to learn the science of it, and apply that knowledge to the development of our agriculture. We have to work like intelligent people, after acquiring the necessary knowledge. But these days, no sooner do the village boys read a book or two of English than they run to the cities. In the village they may have plenty of land, but they do not feel satisfied. They want to enjoy city-life and enter service. That is why the Hindus have not progressed like other races. Our death-rate is very high; and if it continues the same, our nation is bound to meet its doom in no time. The main cause of all this is that our agricultural production is not enough. The inclination to go to the cities is noticeable among the villagers. A farmer's son, after getting a little education, leaves his ancestral profession, goes to the city, and takes a job under the white men. Longevity increases by staying in the villages; and disease is almost unknown there. If educated men go to live in the villages, even small villages will become developed; and if agriculture is carried on scientifically, then the



Kisan Mela



Divyayan Campus



Irrigation Well and Pumpset



Training in Pump Repair



Paddy Threshing Machine



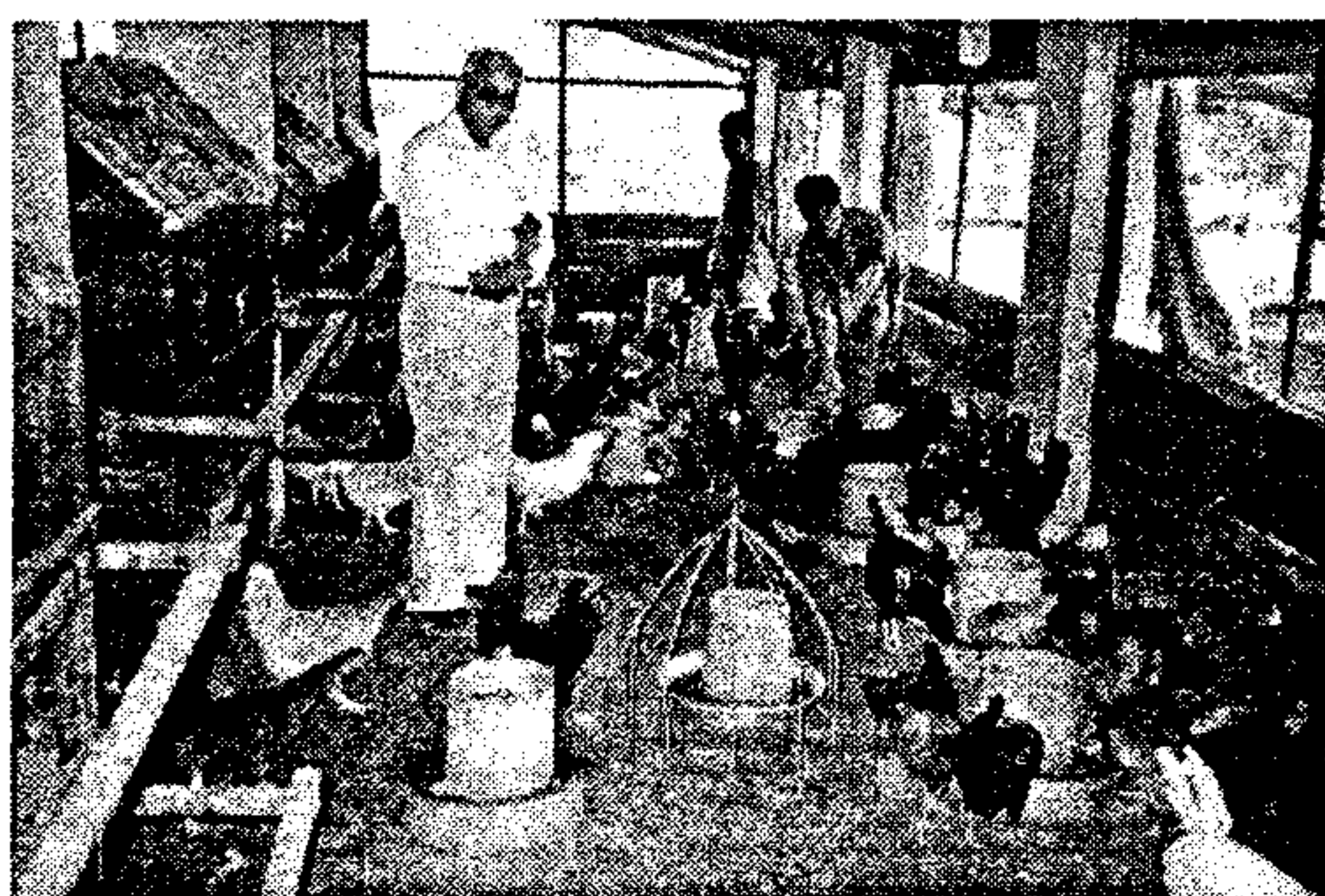
Farmers' Meeting in a Village



Training in Sericulture



Training in Dairy



Training in Poultry Farming



Training in Carpentry



Training in Bee-keeping



*Sri Mangraj Toppo (person in white shirt)
imparting Training in Bee-keeping*

yield will be more. In that way the farmers will be awakened to their duty; their intellectual faculties will develop; they will be able to learn more and better things; and *that*, which is very necessary for our nation, will be achieved.

The disciple asked, 'What is *that*, Swamiji?'

The Swami replied, 'What else but a sort of brotherly feeling developing between the higher and the lower castes. If educated men like you go to the villages, take up agriculture, mix with the village folk and treat them as your own, without hostility, then you will see, they will be so overwhelmed that they will sacrifice even their lives for you. And what is essential for us today—the education of the masses, the teaching of higher truths to people of the lower castes, and mutual sympathy and love—that also will be achieved.'

The disciple asked, 'How will that happen, Swamiji?'

The Swami replied, 'Why! don't you see? If anyone mixes with the villagers, how eager they are for the company of the educated! Thirst for knowledge is in everybody. That is why, when they get the company of an educated man, they sit round him and listen with rapt attention to whatever he says. If educated people take advantage of this tendency of the villagers, invite a group of them to their homes each evening, and teach them with the help of stories and parables, then by means of such a national movement we shall be able to achieve a hundred times more in ten years than we could otherwise achieve in a thousand years.'¹

The conversation has great significance for the Indian scenario. In our country rarely

had people in administration imagined in the past that farmers had to become better farmers possessing the technology needed for improving their production. Swamiji's insight into the problem almost a hundred years back gives us indications of his scientific approach. Divyayan set in motion such a process in this part of the country on the lines shown by Swamiji and initiated action to empower the resource-poor farmers with need-based agricultural technology. And this opened a new chapter in the field of agriculture extension. Now the resource-poor farmers with need-based and appropriate agricultural technology are using the resources at their command to achieve greater farm production and prosperity. The Krishi Vigyan Kendra movement under the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, which has come to stay, also got ideas from the Ranchi work to some extent.

While formulating his plan of work for India, and the Rules for the Ramakrishna Order, strangely enough, Hazaribagh caught the imagination of Swamiji and, as early as in 1901, he indicated the suitability of Hazaribagh as a place of work. In his own words:

In Central India, near Hazaribagh and such other districts, plenty of fertile, well-watered, healthy land may even now be easily available. In that region a big plot of land will have to be acquired and on it a big technical school, and gradually factories etc. will have to be started. As new ways of production of food will be discovered, people will begin to settle down in that colony. Then you can mould them in any shape you like.

As though to make this vision of Swamiji a reality, Divyayan Krishi Vigyan Kendra has come up at Ranchi (district adjoining Hazaribagh) for the discovery of new means for improved production of

1. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 274–5.

food. Lo! the Vivekananda Seva Sanghas in the adopted villages of Ranchi district (like Ghagra Tikra Toli of Mangraj) are moulding the people in a most befitting manner to develop the three H's: Head, Heart and Hand for overall progress of the rural poor.

However, Swamiji was never for external agencies spoon-feeding the masses all the time in the name of working for their uplift. He insisted that self-help groups be formed and the people work for their own uplift in the field of education, economic management, etc. His advice to Swami Akhandanandaji who was then working in Bhagalpur, through a letter from America, lays down the details in this regard:

The starting of a centre at Bhagalpur that you have written about is no doubt a good idea—enlightening the school-boys and things of that sort. But our mission is for the destitute, the poor, and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes, and if, after everything has been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry. Those peasants and labouring people will be won over by love. Afterwards it will be they who will collect small sums and start missions at their own villages, and gradually, from among those very men, teachers will spring.

Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into their brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds and have one of these [missions] in their village. 'उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं—One must raise oneself by one's own exertions'—this holds good in all spheres. We help them to help themselves. That they are supplying you with your daily bread is a real bit of work done. The moment they will come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and

is in the right direction, while the little good that the moneyed classes, out of pity, do to the poor, does not last, and ultimately it does nothing but harm to both parties. The peasants and labouring classes are in a moribund condition, so what is needed is that the moneyed people will only help them to regain their vitality, and nothing more. Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to their own problem, to grapple with and solve it. But then you must take care not to set up class-strife between the poor peasants, the labouring people, and the wealthy classes. Make it a point not to abuse the moneyed classes. 'स्वकार्य-मुद्धरेत्प्राज्ञः—The wise man should achieve his own object.'²

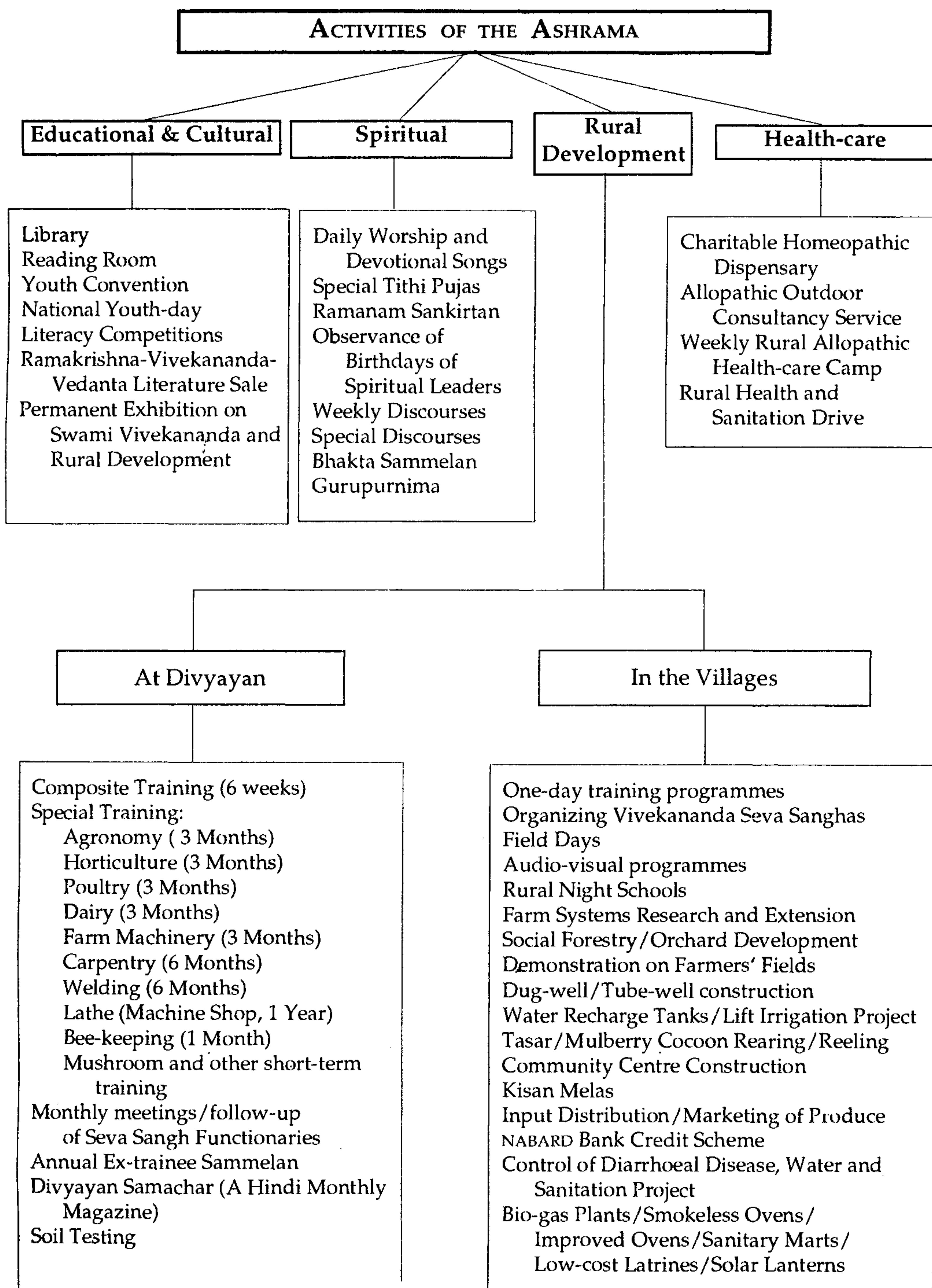
About the type of education to be imparted to the masses he was very clear. He was never in favour of the type of education which was being imparted then which made the students cram a lot of information without digesting. For the masses he preferred non-formal methods. On the method of imparting education, he said:

Suppose you start schools all over India for the poor, still you cannot educate them. How can you? The boy of four years would better go to the plough or to work, than to your school. He cannot go to your school. It is impossible. Self-preservation is the first instinct. But if the mountain does not go to Mohammed, then Mohammed can come to the mountain. Why should not education go from door to door, say I. If a ploughman's boy cannot come to education, why not meet him at the plough, at the factory, just wherever he is?³

Thus we see from the above observa-

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 6, pp. 427–8. [Hereafter, C.W.]

3. C.W., vol. 8, pp. 88–9.



tions that Swamiji had given detailed guidelines about the following aspects of rural development:

1. Starting of centre near Hazaribagh.
2. That centre to work for skill development and for enhanced production in agriculture and allied fields.
3. That such a centre will induce people to settle down and be eager for higher ideals.
4. Our efforts should be concentrated on the downtrodden.
5. Formation of self-help groups in the villages.
6. Scientific agriculture.
7. Agricultural extension through men of learning and skills.
8. Taking education to the masses.
9. The teachers to come up from the villages themselves.
10. Adoption of non-formal method of education.

Divyayan fulfils all the above commands of Swamiji in letter and spirit. See Table I (p. 671) for a full range of Divyayan's activities. The story of Mangraj is but one among many about how it is working and the results that are being achieved. This became possible because of the well-organized work of scientific staff, extension workers and village-level Seva Sangha functionaries working in a close knit fashion under the guidance of monks.

The training imparted at Divyayan endeavours to transmit necessary skills more by the method of 'learning-by-doing' than by book-learning. The stay of the trainees in the clean atmosphere of the Ashrama in the company of monks takes the shape of *guru-griha-vasa*—staying in the guru's house. This indirectly imparts higher values of life. However, even the best training becomes largely ineffective if not followed up. Hence

the well laid out extension strategy of Divyayan where the scientific staff and extension workers visit the adopted villages regularly giving necessary confidence to farmers and encouraging them to adopt scientific methods of production. The self-help groups formed in the name of Vivekananda Seva Sangha in 70 villages of Ranchi district aim at creating local leadership and planning work for a total development of the villages by participatory methods. Any visitor to these villages is struck with wonder at the cordiality, orderliness, cleanliness, dwindling addiction to country liquor in the villages as a whole, and the clear understanding of the concepts and the goals by the so-called less educated villagers. It makes our vision clear that if we work as per the plan laid out by Swamiji for the total development of Man—not a truncated development like only economic development or only spiritual development—we can be sure of achieving the goal. The watchword is very simple.

In India, the first and foremost task is the spread of education and spirituality among the lower classes of people. Unless provision for food can be made, it is impossible for hungry people to have spirituality. Hence, to show them new means of production of food is our first and foremost duty.

Our society which has somehow acquired a lopsided adoption of priorities towards urban population and demands, has to work for the uplift of the rural poor to bridge the gap. More centres like the Divyayan are required and educated men and women should dedicate some of their time and energy for the development of the denied and deprived rural masses. If the rural masses get awakened, all the ills of our society will automatically get eradicated and they will contribute towards an even faster development of our country.

Swami Brahmananda

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Days of Austerity and Pilgrimage

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away on 16 August 1886, his disciples were drowned in sorrow. Rakhal and the others felt helpless, and moreover, some had no place to live in. But with the financial help of Surendra Mitra and the guidance of Narendra, they established the Ramakrishna monastery at Baranagore. In the third week of January 1887 they took their final monastic vows by performing the traditional *viraja homa* (fire ceremony) in front of the Master's picture. Rakhal became Swami Brahmananda. Shortly after this, his father went to the monastery to persuade him to return home. But he calmly and firmly said to his father: 'Why do you take so much trouble to come to me? I am quite happy here. Now bless me that I may forget you and you may forget me.'

Cutting off all family ties and attachments, Brahmananda became so absorbed in japam and meditation that he almost forgot the world. In *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, M. recorded a conversation he had had with Brahmananda in the Baranagore monastery:

Rakhal (*earnestly*): M., let us practise sadhana [spiritual disciplines]! We have renounced home for good. When someone says, 'You have not realized God by renouncing home; then why all this fuss?', Narendra gives a good retort. He says, 'Because we could not attain Ram, must we live with Shyam and beget children?' Ah! Every now and then Narendra says nice things.

M.: What you say is right. I see that

you too have become restless for God.

Rakhal: M., how can I describe the state of my mind? Today at noontime I felt great yearning for the Narmada [a holy river in central India, favoured by ascetics].... Many people think that it is enough not to look at the face of a woman. But what will you gain merely by turning your eyes to the ground at the sight of a woman? Narendra put it very well last night, when he said: 'Woman exists for a man as long as he has lust. Free from lust, one sees no difference between man and woman.'

M.: How true it is! Children do not see the difference between man and woman.

Rakhal: Therefore I say that we must practise spiritual discipline. How can one attain Knowledge without going beyond maya?

In November 1888* Brahmananda went to Puri for a short time, and then in the early part of 1889 he visited Kamarpukur and Jayrambati, the birthplaces of Ramakrishna and Holy Mother. In December 1889 Brahmananda decided to practise intense austerities alone in the holy places of India. He received permission from Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda, but Swamiji insisted that Swami Subodhananda go along and look after him.

Brahmananda and Subodhananda first went to Varanasi via Deoghar and stayed a month. From Varanasi they went to Omkarnath, situated on the bank of the holy river

* November 1887, vide *Sri Ramakrishna Bhaktamalika* (Bengali), vol. 1, p. 114.—Ed.

Narmada. Here Brahmananda lived continuously in samadhi for six days, completely oblivious of the outside world. After Omkarnath they visited Panchavati, on the bank of the river Godavari, a holy place connected with the life of Ramachandra. They then went to Bombay, and from there by steamer to Dwaraka, a place associated with Krishna. They also visited Bet-Dwaraka, Porbandar, Junagad, Girnar, Ahmedabad, and Pushkar. Brahmananda was not an ordinary pilgrim. He saw the living presence of gods and goddesses in these holy places. Later he said: 'Spiritual life begins after nirvikalpa samadhi [the highest transcendental experience].'

In February 1890 Brahmananda and Subodhananda arrived at Vrindaban, the place where Krishna sported as a child. Here they lived on alms and passed their time in intense spiritual practices. On 29 March 1890 Brahmananda wrote a letter to Balaram Basu, describing his spiritual struggle:

Who can understand the divine play of God? Man experiences happiness and misery according to his own karma. This is true of every man — whether he is learned or ignorant, good or wicked. Rare indeed is a person in this world who enjoys uninterrupted peace and bliss! Blessed is he who is free from desires, for he lives in the kingdom of peace. There is more misery than happiness in this world, and most people live in misery. If God is all-merciful then why do his children suffer so much? Only God knows the answer to this mystery, and not ordinary human beings.

Man suffers because of his ignorance, which manifests as 'I' and 'mine.' The really happy and fortunate man is he who has given up his ego and has surrendered his life, mind, and intellect to God, and has nothing to call his own.

The nature of the mind is to dwell on

worldly objects, because it is created out of the three *gunas* (sattva, rajas, and tamas) which also constitute the outer world. It is only through divine grace that a man can withdraw his mind completely from the external objects and put it on God....

Presently my mental condition is not good at all.... I am praying to God that I may remain absorbed in the thought of the Master. That is the one desire of my heart.

A great receptacle like Brahmananda was not satisfied with a few visions or momentary experiences. He was feeling the agony of separation from the Master. He plunged into deep meditation and remained most of the time in an indrawn mood. Subodhananda would beg food for him; sometimes Brahmananda would eat it and sometimes not. Although the two brother disciples lived together, they hardly spoke to one another.

Also living in Vrindaban at this time was Vijaykrishna Goswami, a Vaishnava saint who had known Brahmananda when he was living with Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. One day Vijay asked him: 'The Master gave you all that is covetable in spiritual life: visions and samadhi. Why then do you still practise so much austerity?' Brahmananda humbly answered: 'The experiences and visions I got by his grace, I am now trying to attain as my permanent possession.'

Observing Brahmananda's hardship, rigorous disciplines, and long meditation and prayer, Subodhananda said to him: 'The Master looked upon you as his son. You are the veritable son of the Lord. It does not befit you to sit like a beggar seeking his grace.' Brahmananda replied: 'What you say, brother, is true. The Master loved us so dearly that he gave us everything he had to

give. Still we have not attained peace. This shows that it now lies with us to do the rest for the fulfilment of life's objective. Uddhava was Krishna's dear friend, yet Krishna said to him: "If you want to properly realize any spiritual truth, you must go to some solitary place in the Himalayas and practise austerity. I can grant you some miraculous visions, if you like. But that won't be enough. It is much greater to contemplate and meditate on Him." Indeed, without meditation and contemplation none can know anything about God.'

In April 1890 Subodhananda left for a pilgrimage to Hardwar, and Brahmananda remained alone in Vrindaban. The spiritual journey is truly 'a flight of the alone to the Alone.' Forgetting the world and his body, Brahmananda again plunged into the inner realm. In May Brahmananda heard that two important disciples of the Master had died: Balaram and Surendra. He grieved for them. In September he left Vrindaban and went to Kankhal (Hardwar) in the foothills of the Himalayas — an important place for ascetics. Here he met Vivekananda, Turiyananda, Saradananda, and other brother disciples. In November* they all went to Meerut to see Swami Akhandananda, who was recuperating from a severe illness. In Meerut these disciples lived together for nearly six weeks and spent their days in meditation, study, discussion, and devotional singing as they had done in the Baranagore monastery.

In the latter part of January 1891 Vivekananda left Meerut to travel alone in other

* According to another view, based on Swami Akhandanandaji's letters of 20 November and 5 December 1890, Swamiji and the party did not reach Meerut earlier than the first week of December 1890, vide *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western disciples (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1994), vol.1, p. 258. [Hereafter, *Life*].—Ed.

parts of India. Brahmananda and Turiyananda went to Jwalamukhi, a holy place in Punjab. During the next two years they visited many holy places in Punjab, Sind, Rajputana, and Maharashtra. In April 1893 in Bombay they unexpectedly met Vivekananda, who was then making preparations to attend the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. The swamis then went to Mount Abu and from there proceeded to Vrindaban in July 1893.

As God tests the faith of mystics, so mystics also verify God's grace. One day Turiyananda said to Brahmananda: 'Today I shall not go out to beg for food. Let us see if Radha [the spiritual consort of Krishna and the goddess of Vrindaban] will feed us.' Both swamis passed the whole day and night in meditation, and the next morning a man brought various kinds of food for them. On another occasion, when they were practising austerities near Lake Kusum (a suburb of Vrindaban), Turiyananda received only a little dry bread from begging. Offering that to Brahmananda, he said: 'Maharaj, the Master used to take such wonderful care of you. He would feed you with delicacies, and I am feeding you this dry, tasteless bread.' So saying, he burst into tears.

Monks depend solely on God. They sometimes follow the example of a python that gets its prey without moving. In Vrindaban, Brahmananda took a vow of self-surrender, accepting only what God provided for him without asking; that day a devotee provided his food and other necessities, unasked. Another day while he was meditating a man put a new blanket in front of him and left. After a short while a thief came and took away the blanket. Brahmananda silently observed the play of maya and smiled.

Ability to resist temptation is one of the tests of spirituality. The Queen of Bharatpur

heard about Brahmananda and Turiyananda, and came to visit them at Lake Kusum. She was very much impressed by Brahmananda's serene face and offered some sweets to him. When the swami opened one of the sweets, he found a gold coin inside. Immediately he put the sweet down, informed Turiyananda about the queen's rich offering, and both quietly left the place.

The swamis then went to Ayodhya, the birthplace of Ramachandra. They could not remain there long because of famine. One day Turiyananda went to beg for food and was given some boiled *kachu* (an edible root). As soon as they had eaten, their throats began to sting and burn, and gradually their mouths and tongues swelled. Seeing Brahmananda suffering, Turiyananda went out to find a lime, an antidote for the allergy. He found a lime grove, but he could not see any fruit on the trees. He sought out the owner of the grove but was told that the fruit was out of season. Passing the grove again, he keenly searched the trees, and unexpectedly saw a lime. With the permission of the owner he plucked the lime and ran back to Brahmananda with it. It immediately relieved his painful throat. That night Brahmananda lamented, addressing Ramakrishna: 'Master, why did you take me from home if you could not provide a morsel of food? Tomorrow morning if I get hot *khichuri* [rice and lentils cooked together] and pickles, I shall understand that you are with me.'

The next morning the swamis went to bathe in the Sarayu River. A monk arrived and said to Brahmananda: 'Swami, I understand that both of you fasted yesterday. Please come to my cottage and have some *khichuri*, which I offered to Lord Rama.' The monk served hot *khichuri* and pickles to the swamis. They greatly enjoyed the meal. The monk then said: 'Blessed am I! For the last

twenty-four years I have been practising sadhana here in order to have a vision or to hear the voice of Lord Rama. Today the Lord has blessed me.' Tears trickled from the monk's eyes. At Brahmananda's request, he elaborated: 'While I was sleeping last night I saw that Lord Rama touched my body with his soft hand and said: "Get up! I am hungry. Cook *khichuri* and offer it to me. Tomorrow morning you will see two devotees bathing at the ghat of the Sarayu River. They are fasting. Offer my prasada to them." It is by your grace that I had the vision of Lord Rama.' While returning to their cottage Brahmananda related to Turiyananda the mystery behind the incident.

When Brahmananda left Calcutta to practise austerity, his wife Vishweshwari raised their little child, Satyananda, and lived like a nun. She practised severe austerities and died in the fall of 1891. The boy was then raised by his uncle, and occasionally lived with his grandfather. The disciples of the Master were very fond of the boy and wanted him to become a monk. Unfortunately, in 1895 Satyananda was severely injured in an accidental fall: his chest was badly injured. When he returned to Calcutta, Brahmananda visited his son several times. His wealthy father, Anandamohan, tried everything to save Satyananda, but he died on 20 April 1896 at the age of ten. Shortly after, Anandamohan passed away. Brahmananda absorbed all these tragedies and remained as unperturbed as a mountain.

Brahmananda heard about Vivekananda's success at the Parliament of Religions in America in September 1893 when he was engaged in sadhana. Vivekananda was now urging his brother disciples to band together and carry on the mission of the Master. In 1892 the Ramakrishna Math had been moved from Baranagore to Alambazar. In January 1895 Brahmananda created a

great stir of enthusiasm among his brother disciples when he returned to them at the Alambazar monastery.

With Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda returned to Calcutta from the West on 19 February 1897, and received a wonderful reception from his brother disciples and the public. When Vivekananda's carriage reached Pasupati Basu's house in Baghbazar, Brahmananda came forward and garlanded their leader. Swamiji bowed down to Brahmananda and remarked with respect: 'The son of the guru should be treated as the guru himself.' Brahmananda also, immediately bowed down to Vivekananda, saying: 'The elder brother is like one's father.' Swamiji then handed over to Brahmananda all the money he had collected from the West for the Indian work, and said: 'Now I am relieved. I have handed over the sacred trust to the right person.'

Because there was not enough room in the Alambazar monastery, it was arranged that Swamiji and his Western disciples should stay in Gopallal Villa* in Baranagore. After the civic reception in Calcutta on 28 February, Swamiji accompanied Brahmananda and others to Darjeeling to rest as well as to discuss the future of the Ramakrishna Order. On 1 May 1897, Vivekananda, Brahmananda, and other disciples and devotees of Ramakrishna gathered in Balaram Basu's house, Calcutta, and formed the Ramakrishna Mission. Vivekananda became the General President and Brahmananda became the President of the Calcutta centre.

Vivekananda was the leader of the Order, and Brahmananda was his friend, philosopher, and guide. The latter imple-

mented Swamiji's plans concerning the management of the Alambazar monastery as well as conducting the Ramakrishna Mission's philanthropic activities. Brahmananda was extremely practical and endowed with strong common sense. Sweet and loving by nature, he had above all other qualities, a tremendous spiritual power that enabled him to evaluate people's abilities.

In February 1898 the monastery was moved from Alambazar to Nilambar Mukherjee's garden house in the Belur village; a plot of land was purchased there on the bank of the Ganges. Under Swamiji's direction, the brother monks took the responsibility of levelling the ground and building the living quarters and shrine. On 9 December 1898 Swamiji consecrated the Belur monastery.

Brahmananda used to handle the accounts, keep the monastery's diary, supervise the monastery, and give spiritual instructions to the novices. 'Whenever you give lectures,' Maharaj said to the monks, 'please use Sri Ramakrishna's teachings as much as possible, because it is easy to understand the true import of the scriptures through his teachings. The Master used to say that there should not be any theft [i.e., hypocrisy] in the inner chamber of the heart. He had great affection for the simple-hearted. He used to say: "I don't care for flattery. I love the person who calls on God sincerely." The Master also said that all impurities of the mind disappear when one calls on God with a sincere heart.' Once a Western gentleman came to Swamiji with some spiritual questions. He sent the gentleman to Brahmananda, saying, 'There is a dynamo working and we are all under him.' Another time Swamiji said to his disciple Sharat Chakrabarty: 'Even I have not the spirituality that Rakhal has. He is the jewel of our monastery, our king.'

* Gopallal Villa was then known as Seals' Garden, vide *Life*, vol. 2, p. 218.

about Swamiji's health, as he suffered from asthma and other ailments. One day Girish Ghosh came to visit Swamiji at Belur Math and heard that he was sick in bed. After a while, Girish saw Swamiji downstairs and said, 'I heard that you had become seriously ill.' Swamiji said jokingly: 'You see, when I close my eyes to sleep, I see Raja's [Brahmananda's] face full of anxiety for me. I am walking now, so that he will be happy. He wants to make me a patient. As a matter of fact I am all right.' Afterwards Swamiji praised Brahmananda's administrative capacity: 'I have been stunned to see Raja's work. How nicely he is running the monastery. Sri Ramakrishna used to say about him, 'He could run a kingdom.'"

On 20 June 1899, at the request of his Western devotees and brother disciples, Vivekananda left for the West to recover his health. He returned to Belur Math in December 1900, still his health was poor. He knew that he would not live long. In early 1902, he resigned from the presidency of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and made Brahmananda president. The swami held this paramount position until he died more than two decades later.

The relationship between Vivekananda and Brahmananda was wonderful. Both were *nityasiddhas* and *ishwarakotis*, born to fulfil the mission of Sri Ramakrishna. They knew each other from their school days and had perfect mutual trust and understanding. Whenever Vivekananda's pets disrupted Brahmananda's flower and vegetable gardens in the monastery, they would have a childish war of words that was very amusing to anyone who witnessed it. Vivekananda introduced a rule that every monk must go to the shrine very early in the morning and practise meditation; absentees would have to beg for their food that day outside the monastery. One morning Swamiji found that Brahmananda and some

other monks were not in the shrine. He reminded them of the rule and left for Calcutta, because it would have been unbearable for him to see the sad plight of his brother disciples. After his return the next day, he was overjoyed when he heard that Brahmananda had had a sumptuous meal at a rich merchant's house in an adjacent village.

Sharat Chakrabarty recorded the following incident that took place in 1902:

The disciple [Sharat] passed the preceding night in Swamiji's room. At 4:00 a.m. Swamiji roused him and said, 'Go ring the bell to wake up the monks and brahmacharins from sleep.' Following this order, the disciple rang the bell near the monks who hurriedly got up, and after washing they went to the shrine for meditation.

According to Swamiji's instruction, the disciple rang the bell vigorously near Brahmananda's room, which made him remark: 'Good heavens! This Bangal [Sharat, originally from Bangladesh] has made it too hot for us to stay in the Math.' When the disciple reported this to Swamiji, he laughed heartily and said, 'Well done!'

Swamiji wanted a ghat and an embankment built on the bank of the Ganges at Belur Math; Swami Vijnanananda, an ex-engineer, was entrusted with completing the project. He underestimated the cost, but Brahmananda took the risk of finishing it. When Swamiji learned that the budget had been exceeded, he scolded Brahmananda harshly. The swami went to his room, closed the door, and cried profusely. Afterwards Swamiji tearfully apologized: 'Raja, please forgive me. I know how much the Master loved you and never said a harsh word to you. And I, on the other hand, for the sake

(Continued on page 699)

Powers of the Mind-I

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.... If we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed, we must go deeper.

All the great prophets, saints and seers of the world—what did they do? In one span of life, they lived the whole life of humanity, traversed the whole length of time that it takes ordinary humanity to come to perfection. In one life, they perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, never live a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the power of assimilation, thus shortening the time.

The more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only method of acquiring knowledge. Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light.

How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by the concentration of the powers of the mind? The world is ready to give up its secrets, if we only know how to knock, how to give it the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; that is the secret.

No force can be created; it can only be directed. Therefore, we must learn to control the grand powers that are already in our hands, and by will power make them spiritual, instead of merely animal. Thus it is clearly seen that chastity is the cornerstone of all morality and of all religion.

Free! We who cannot, for a moment, govern our own minds, nay, cannot hold our minds on a subject, focus it on a point to the exclusion of everything else, for a moment! Yet we call ourselves free. Think of it!... The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down, down, for ever—rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided will save us, free us.

The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration.... The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man....Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore, he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake!

The Way to Freedom from Prakṛti

P.V. NARAYANA SWAMY

Due to the inevitable flux of time, traditional ethical values got eroded slowly but steadily. Social conditions changed so fast that there came about a violent note of departure from ageold methods of functioning. The earnestness for a penetrative study and assimilation gave way to a slipshod method of cursory reading and superficial understanding. No less a personage than Shankaracharya justified his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita because not many understood the true and esoteric significance of the teaching contained in the Gita.

In this article the author from Bangalore analyses Chapter 13 of the Gita to show that the main objective of this chapter is to free the Jivatman from the octopus grip of Prakṛti's tentacles and gain reunion with Brahman. Several traits of Jñāna for contemplation in order to gain a correct perspective to discriminate between Brahman and Prakṛti are presented.

Bhagavad-Gita contains three rounds of teaching based on the *Mahāvākya*—*tat tvamasi* 'That thou art'. The first six chapters signify the 'Thou' aspect which prepares the individual for a proper insight into the pursuit. The import is of a general nature—a sort of preliminary introduction to what is to follow as a serious and abstruse topic.

The second round of teaching represented by the 'That' aspect underscores devotion and invocation for gaining His special grace. How to surrender to God and get at the final non-dual truth is elaborated in Chapters 7 through 12.

The 'Art' aspect dealt in Chapters 13 through 15 deal with concentration, contemplation and knowledge required for holding on to the ultimate truth. Chapters 16 through 18 form the summing up—the *upasamhāra*.

If *Tat tvamasi*—That thou art—is the message of the whole of the Bhagavad-Gita, then Chapter 13 constitutes the bedrock in that it seeks to inculcate that very idea—i.e. 'You are not the body but you are the At-

man'. The basic discrimination between the body and the Atman is detailed in this chapter, an understanding of which is the *sine qua non* for achieving mergence in Brahman.

The Chapter is a sequel to what the Bhagavan had said in Chapter 12, Śloka 7, namely, that He would be the Deliverer for such people from the morass of *samsāra* as have their minds absorbed in Him. How would He deliver them? The answer can be sought from Chapter 13 onwards.

Since the subject of discrimination between the body and the Atman is extremely subtle—more so for a man of untrained intellect—some catch words as detailed below help one in the proper understanding of the pursuit. Furthermore, examples help one to correctly perceive the truth. However, the ultimate culmination is possible only through one's indefatigable self-efforts supplemented, of course, by the grace and blessings of one's preceptor. As Sri Shankaracharya says in his celebrated work the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*:

*Vastusvarūpaṁ sphuṭabodhacakṣuṣā
svenaiva vedyam na tu paṇḍitena;
Candrasvarūpaṁ nijacakṣuṣaiva
jñātaavyamanyairavagamyate kim. (54)*

The true nature of things is to be known personally, through the eye of clear illumination, and not through a sage; what the moon exactly is, is to be known with one's own eyes; can others make him know it?

The catch words encountered in Chapter 13 are *Kṣetra*, *Kṣetrajña*, *Jñāna*, *Jñeyam*, *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*. Among these, however, *Kṣetra* and *Kṣetrajña* constitute the warp and woof of the whole concept. The literal meaning of *Kṣetra* is, that which is protected from perishing. It also connotes the human body which is euphemistically called the 'field'. *Kṣetrajña* is the knower of the 'field'. These meanings are, however, far too simplistic and the terms imply deeper significance.

Kṣetra comprises of the whole world—the three bodies (gross, causal and subtle), all names and forms, all movable and immovable objects. It also embraces the five great elements, ego, mind and intellect together with their modifications in any number of permutations and combinations. In fact *kṣetra* is body together with anything that comes within the ambit of its own scope of experience. A field can be improved by removing weeds and by making it congenial for the growth of grains so that it becomes more productive—to the extent to which we put in our efforts. In a like manner, as far as the human body is concerned, what one sows one invariably reaps—i.e., man inherits inevitably the results of his own past karma. *Kṣetra* thus represents the lower truth—the apparent reality which enjoins us to play a role with the laudable objective of sustaining the universe.

Kṣetrajña is the intelligent principle residing in the body and governing it. It is the

illuminator of the *kṣetra*. It symbolizes higher truth, which consciously plays the role of the real self. We play in the field (*kṣetra*) which gives exercise to the organs of the senses and action, and interacts ceaselessly with the created world of various differing forms. Sri Shankaracharya in his famous *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-Stotram* avers:

*Nānāchidra-ghaṭodarasthita-
mahādīpaprabhābhāsvaram
jñānam yasya tu cakṣurādikarāṇadvārā
bahih spandate;
Jānāmīti tameva bhāntamanubhātyetat-
samastam jagat
tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye nama idam
śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye. (4)*

To Him who is luminous like the light of a great lamp set in the belly of a pot with many holes: to Him whose knowledge moves outward through the eye and other organs: to Him, who shining as 'I know', all the entire universe shines after: to Him of the form of the Preceptor, the blessed Dakṣiṇāmūrti, may this obeisance be!

Imagine a pot with five holes and a bright light placed within. Five shafts of light emerge illuminating whatever falls within the paths of the beams. Similarly, the physical body is as a fragile and brittle pot with eyes, ears, tongue, skin and nose as its apertures. The light which illumines the objects within the purview of these holes—the organs of the senses—, is the *kṣetrajña*, distinct from the body. The *kṣetrajña*, however, is common to all bodies, because it stands for 'awareness' and is universal, i.e. the substratum for all names and forms. As a matter of fact, wide and varied differences can and do exist in *kṣetras* but not in the *kṣetrajña*, the Indweller in all. He is also called the *Puruṣa*, in the city of nine gates—the body; *Jñeyam* means Knowable—the *Puruṣa* or the *kṣetrajña*.

In Ślokas 7 through 11 Bhagavan gives the characteristics of one endowed with *Jñāna*, Knowledge:

- a) Absence of self pride,
- b) Absolute unpretentiousness,
- c) Non-injury to others in thought, word and deed,
- d) Limitless compassion,
- e) Straightforwardness,
- f) A willing surrender to the Preceptor,
- g) A spotlessly clean body and a transparent purity of mind,
- h) Utter self-restraint leading to steadiness of attitude to withstand any adversity,
- i) Unmitigated control of the senses, with an inner cheer,
- j) Unquestioned dispassion towards the objects of the senses,
- k) Total absence of egotism,
- l) The confirmed conviction, that birth, old age, decay and death are harbingers of sorrow and evil,
- m) Downright non-attachment to wife, children, home, etc. giving rise to mental freedom,
- n) Perfect equanimity of mind,
- o) Unwavering devotion to the Lord with single-minded concentration,
- p) Inclination to repair into a clean place,
- q) Supreme dislike for worldly company and being given to gossip and slander; and a compelling affinity for seclusion and contemplation,
- r) Steadfast constancy in Ātma Jñāna, pondering over Vedic dicta in the form of the *mahā-vākyas* like 'That thou art', 'I am Brahman', etc., and,
- s) Contemplation on the Goal of the Knowledge of Reality.

Saint Jnaneswar in his magnum-opus on the Gita entitled *Jñāneśvari* goes into ecstasy over these five ślokas describing the

above twenty traits and has elaborated their true import in seven hundred verses!

Jñeyam means Knowable, namely the *kṣetrajñā*. One cannot and should not give up the pursuit of knowing the *kṣetrajñā*, till the very last breath of one's life because of its unobjectifiable nature. *Jñeyam* is a further elucidation of *kṣetrajñā*. One should always remember *kṣetra*—the lower truth in all perceptions involving duality, and the *kṣetrajñā*—the higher truth when free from duality. One should understand duality in the background of the ultimate truth which is non-dual. An example in this context is the ocean and its waves. Both contain the same water. And the ocean is the unchanging substratum on which the ever-changing waves rise and dash against one another making all the noise. One should always be alive to the lower truth (waves), and at the same time be conscious of the higher truth (ocean). The higher truth is infinite, beyond space, time and causation, and changeless. The world of names and forms and one's experiences are limited perceptions of the Infinite through the mist of *Māyā*. As the Bhagavan clearly states in Śloka 30, 'When one realizes that the state of diversity of living things is rooted in the One, and that their manifestation is also from That, then one becomes identified with Brahman.'

Prakṛti means—'*Prakarṣeṇa sṛṣṭyādikam karoti iti*, which implies the cosmic principle that brings about creation. *Prakṛti* is the inseparable principle underlying the apparent creation. It stands for '*svabhāva*'—nature. In a Vedantic sense it signifies *Māyā* which both binds the individual through ignorance and also liberates him from bondage enabling one to enjoy freedom. *Puruṣa* implies *Purīṣayanāt* which signifies one who stays in the body, the city of nine gates. Illuminator of *Prakṛti* is *Puruṣa*, who is the same as *kṣetrajñā*.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan,

Prakṛti is unconscious activity and *Puruṣa* is inactive consciousness. *Prakṛti* juxtaposed with *Puruṣa* constitutes the material cause of creation, the latter being the efficient cause. Thus, though *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* independent of the other are inert, their combination becomes dynamic. Liberation from the shackles of *Prakṛti* is gained by the *Puruṣa* through discrimination between what is eternal spirit and what is finite matter, i.e., between the Atman and the body.

The subject of realizing the self necessarily involves being guided by a preceptor. Catch words and analogies help to root one's mind on ideas which are difficult to grasp. But with all that, one's unwavering self-effort is essential. Bhagavan highlights these when He uses the terms *Ācāryopāśanam* (Service to the Guru) in Śloka 7 and *Adhyātma Jñānanityatvam* (Steadfastness in the knowledge of the Self) in Śloka 11. Mere theoretical knowledge may make one a veritable pedagogue, but never a realized soul. As Sri Shankaracharya says in the *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, Śloka 60, '*Śabdajālaṁ mahāranyam cittabhramaṇakāraṇam...*'. The scriptures consisting of many words are as a dense forest which merely causes the mind to ramble.... A weak and wavering mind may be totally lost in delusion. One should realize that the pursuit calls for a full-time, lifelong endeavour with a tranquil mind. One should accept the world as it is, through thick and thin, in one's own stride, with the firm conviction that cosmic law is under operation as ordained by Him. One should steer clear of wrong tendencies and negative *vāsanās*. One should function in a detached manner untouched by the pairs of opposites. Though *kṣetrajña* is the Indweller and Inner Controller in all beings, He is far from those who do not perceive Him, and He is the inmost Self of those who know Him. The Self has two noteworthy states—one of transcendence and the other of imminence. Hence the description given by Bhagavan in a se-

ries of apparently conflicting phrases may appear to be on superficial reading a string of paradoxes. Though the *Puruṣa* is free from the *guṇās*, yet in proximity with *Prakṛti*, it aids the *guṇās* in shining, vide Śloka 14. While the *Nirguṇa Brahman* is incomprehensible to those with impure minds, yet it is ever perceived by those who are wise. Śloka 16 implies that Brahman remains undivided as the cause, and appears divided as the effect.

Finally, Bhagavan says that *kṣetrajña* remains as the unflinching essence in the hearts of all beings. One can experience It only through the *Jñāna-cakṣu*—the eye of Wisdom.

To help one assess one's progress in spiritual life, Bhagavan describes in Śloka 22 the stages of evolution thus:

1. When man has animal tendencies, and is given to a cybernetic way of living, God in him is a passive onlooker (*Upadṛaṣṭā*).
2. When man transcends negative traits and discriminates so that self-indulgence is replaced by self-control, God in him is a willing permitter (*Anumantā*).
3. When man attains a higher level of spiritual amelioration, when he identifies himself more and more with the Self and less with the body, God in him is a pillar of encouraging support (*Bhartā*).
4. The next rung in the ladder of progress is marked by dedication of the results of all action to Him. God in him is an appreciative enjoyer (*Bhoktā*).
5. Finally, when man lives perpetually in God, the Self in him, He himself is the overlord (*Maheśvara*).

In conclusion it may be said that the main objective of Chapter 13 is to free the Jivatman from the octopus-like grip of *Prakṛti* and gain reunion with Brahman. Ignorance which does not enable us to dif-

ferentiate between the *Puruṣa* and the *Prakṛti*, between the Atman and the body, leads to transmigratory existence. The several traits of *Jñāna* for contemplation in order

to gain a correct perspective to discriminate between Brahman and *Prakṛti* are presented. □

Human Woe-II

(Continued from page 662)

the work in the field of education.

Swami Akhandananda also helped individuals who were neglected by their parents by arranging for their education. He also advised the Raja of Khetri to set up a permanent Education Department and open schools in different villages. He was keen on the introduction of Vedic studies in schools. Thus in many ways by exerting a silent influence of the ruler of Khetri, the Swami could do much for the spread of education.

It was customary to hold a festival on the birthday of the Raja. One of the items was accepting tributes from chiefs and high officials. Swami Akhandananda's keen vision did not fail to notice that the poor had no access to this festival. In the afternoon the courtiers held their own court and accepted tributes from the poor. This was too much for the Swami to bear. He told the Raja:

You take pride in being descended from Ramachandra, who banished his most beloved Sita to please his subjects, while you do not even allow your subjects to see you, not to speak of permitting their presence at the official recep-

tion.

The Swami wept as he said this and the Raja understood his mistake. From the very next year, the Raja held court with all the subjects present and accepted the tributes himself.

The Swami's attention next turned to the sick and the ailing. He himself toured the village, brought patients to hospitals and arranged for their proper treatment. He also tried to improve the state's agricultural system in the light of information obtained from magazines on farming and agriculture. This period of the Swami's life is full of incidents all directed to improving the social life of the people, and cultivating a sense of dedication in the hearts of the rulers or landlords as the case may be. His chief concern was making arrangements for the gift of secular education, the gift of life and medical aid, and the gift of food, clothing and shelter. He was also interested in changing the attitude of the rich towards the poor, not through political means but through the subtle power of his pure-hearted, all sacrificing soul.

(to be continued)

The body that is not animated by the sentiment of love is a cemetery. It is just like the bellows of the blacksmith that breathe without life.

—Lala Kannoo Mal, *The Sayings of Kabir*, p. 11

...And Let Shyama Dance There

P. SHNEIDRE

The author's rendering of Swami Vivekananda's poems in current idiom have appeared before in the Prabuddha Bharata. The present poem is one more in the series and we believe the readers will like it.

Blossoms uncork their maddening perfume,
and a world of bees begins to buzz and swarm.
Tonight the silver moon is gorgeous smile,
one of many sent down to find homes on earth.

A fragrant breeze that comes up from the south
whispers of all the sandalwood it found along the way
—but it's starting to brush against our memories, too;
it unfolds them easily, like old letters
murmuring of rivers and streams,
rippling lakes,
and those beetles that live—as we would like to live—
on honey only,
wheeling through the air over lotuses
waving to us gently

as a current quickens, a river of music
the mountain caves will always have an answer for;
warblers, made of song, hide in the leaves
to suddenly pour their hearts out
in sweet nothings;

the rising hope of day, the sun,
the one that touched so tenderly the earth,
its canvas, only this morning,
flooded a palette of colours all through nature—
a museum's worth spilled out
and a heart, too, overflowed its banks.

But when thunder shouts and clouds collide,
an elemental war will split the earth and sky;
darkness throws up a challenge: more darkness.
And a wind behind the world starts to roar.

In quick shots of bright joy bolts of red lightning flash
like arrows pointing suddenly at death;
monstrous waves argue with the thunder, foaming,
shoving their way up mountains;

the earth is shouting, swaying, falling back,
sinking to its knees, and now has lost its place;
falling through the earth, huge mountains
crumble to atom dust

but a pretty little house on a lake of blue
is still standing,
surrounded by a cluster of water lilies;
ripe grapes bleed for us,
whispering their tale of passion,

and as the song of the harp flows through us,
its melody takes its sweet time
to harmonize desire.
O, the emotions that come to live in us!
Warm sighs of love, and just as warm
the tears that'll soon come down!

Youth's red lips
under two blue oceans of feeling
—and below, two hands eager to open love's cage
where they think the heart, O quiet little bird,
is in prison.

But the marching music begins again, and trumpets sound,
the ground shakes beneath an army's heavy weight;
the roar of cannon, rattle of the guns,
masses of smoke, the appalled ground where the dead fall;
pounding artillery belching hell's own fire
in a thousand directions; shells bursting to find
the softest bodies;
elephants, men, horses exploding together,
hurtling through space;

earth itself shakes with this hideous dance
of a million heroes on a million horses
charging and capturing flags,
pausing only to peer through the smoke
and a shower of mortar
and bullets raining
to see if a flag is still there;

it is! There it is,
reliable sign of victory and heroism
as blood, still warm, drips down the flagpole;
even the rifles are drunk on it.

Look!

The leader falters, but the flag goes on—
any shoulder's just as good; who is left to care?
Underneath is a soft carpet of the dead.

*The flesh wants its pleasure,
the senses to sing,
the mind aches for laughter
but the heart takes wing.*

It tried to feel its way to a world beyond sorrow;
tell me if you'd trade *your* moonlight
for the harsh glare of noon.
I didn't think so;
even the fool with a heart hot as the sun
wants, at night, to come undone
under a gentle moon;

by all means, let us have joy.
Where's the poor fool who hugs pain and sorrow?
Put misery in his happy cup,
venom in his juice;
he gargles poison, but at least his hope's alive!
Oh, what a wretch.

But then, everyone shrinks from the terrible.
No one wants a goddess
who resembles death too closely,
dancing in the cremation ground
with a horrible sword smelling of blood;
they lift it gingerly from her hand
to make room for a flute!

But O Shyama, Dark One,
O Kali, destroyer of all,
you alone are true;
sweet little Krishna is but a shadow of your reflection.
Terrible mother, carve the truth out of us,
hack the illusion away;
come, silence our dreams of happiness in half
and tear away our fondness for the flesh.

Oh sure,
they're willing to drape skulls on you
in their imagination—but then they get cold feet,
shrinking back and calling you 'All Merciful!'
They hear you giggling at their time of need,
but they don't believe their ears.
Even your simple nudity appalls—
for you wear only space, a fabric of your own design,
and this scares them, too.

And after all this, they can still say
It is only demons, not us, that the Mother kills.
Right. They pretend to want you,
but when you knock, they run away.
You are death! Lovingly,
tenderly, without bias, to each of your children
you distribute plague and disease—
cups filled by your own hand, generously, to the brim,
with venom.

Idiots! You cheat yourself out of your own mother,
your terrible one.
You're tempting misery by hoping for happiness;
you cloak yourselves in worship and devotion,
and all the while your mind
is filled with dreams of coming out ahead.

You hang back far enough so the blood
from a baby goat's head won't splash on you
and your tender heart, which aches
at the very idea, am I right?
You cowards! Compassionate?
Who are you to be compassionate!
This is an odd situation,
but I can't find anyone to even mention it to.
No one willingly sees the truth.

Free yourself from temptation—
the liquor of love, the drug of sex.
Break your sweet harps! From now on, roar like the ocean.
Drink tears, promise your life away,
let the body fall where it may.

Wake up, you hero! Blink the dreams away,
 Death is right in front of you anyway;
 is fear going to help you?
 Yes, it hurts to become yourself.
 Birth and death are both painful.
 But this struggle is God,
 whose temple is in the cremation ground.
 Constant struggle—that should be your offering,
 that's what is sacred, that's what is God's.
 Constant defeat shouldn't mean a thing.
 Your name has become a name for very little.
 Set your little self and its hopes on fire,
 turn your heart into a cremation ground
 ...and let Shyama dance there. □

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

(Continued from page 664)

*Tasmāc-ca devā bahudhā samprasūtāḥ
 sādhyā manuṣyāḥ paśavo vāyāṁsi;
 Prāṇāpānau vṛīhi-yavau tapaś-ca
 śraddhā satyaṁ
 brahmacaryaṁ vidhiś-ca. (II.i.7)*

And from Him the gods are produced manifoldly (in various groups), the celestial gods, human beings, beasts, birds, the in-breath and the out-breath, rice and barley, as well as austerity, faith, truth, chastity and the law.

From That the *devatas*, the effulgent ones, have emerged. By analysis, the gods are the abstract principles of nature or abstractions of excellent qualities in man. For example, *sarva-vighna-nāśakaḥ Gaṇapati* represents the elephant's unfailing memory for lessons learnt which leads to success. Secondly, the elephant's head represents steadfastness in reaching the goal, without allowing anything to swerve it away from the path. The elephant also measures every step cautiously which procedure man must emu-

late. So it is that *Gaṇapati* is *sarva-siddhi-dāyakaḥ*. Thus, the *devas* are luminous and enlightening our understanding by their effulgent wisdom. These deities have come from that abstract *Puruṣa* and are concretised. There is a saying that there are thirty-three crores of *devatas*, i.e., each person has the freedom to choose a deity in accordance with the qualities he needs to make him a better person. This is the means to realize the Divinity within oneself.

The *sādhyās* (spiritual people) as well as men, animals, cattle, birds, etc. are created by that Being. The *pañca-prāṇas*: viz., *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, indicated by the in- and out-going breaths, are the life-force sustaining all living beings. They live on rice and barley as the food items and practise in their lives austerity, faith, truth, continence, dutifulness, and abide by the code of conduct laid down by society. These subtle, intangible qualities of humanity are also products of the Divine.

(to be continued)

Truth in the Light of Mind-Brain System

DR. SAMPOORAN SINGH

In this article, the learned author, Dr. Sampooran Singh, explores science and truth, to investigate the relationship between life and truth, the relevance of truth for different frames of reference of the mind-brain system. The author presents parallels between psychosocial evolution and spiritual evolution. He also discusses life and death, love and truth, truth and lie, and absolute Truth. He points out that we 'go on creating new problems on the one hand and trying to solve them on the other to maintain the illusion of "progress". ...not much time is left now, because the conditioning is leading mankind to insanity, irrationality, and annihilation.' The solution therefore lies in the 'mutation of the human psyche which leads to radical transformation of the foundations of perception and the source of response.'

The famous statement, issued in 1955, jointly by Bertrand Russell, Einstein, Yukawa and others is even more relevant today. The declaration of the Pugwash Movement on the occasion of the 25th Pugwash Anniversary Conference in Warsaw (August 1982) signed by nearly 100 Nobel laureates amongst others, concludes:

In the circumstances in which mankind finds itself, the warning sounded so eloquently twenty-seven years ago in the Russell-Einstein Manifesto takes on a new urgency: There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal, as human beings to human beings. Remember your humanity and forget the rest.

During the last forty years, eminent scientists have been trying to bring sustainable peace on earth, but have miserably failed. Why is it so? What are the causes of our failure? The basic cause is that we never sought to resolve the challenges facing mankind through observation, enquiry, self-knowledge, and understanding the mind-brain system, and arrived at a direct perception of *Truth* which lies beyond intellectual percepts, theories and description. We never

investigated the fundamental questions about the wholeness of life, the true meaning of love and truth, life and death, and the limitations and psychodynamics of our mind-brain system.

Today we live in a globally interconnected world in which biological, psychological, and environmental phenomena are shared by all human beings, so we are all interdependent. To describe this world appropriately we need a new paradigm, a new vision of reality—a fundamental transformation in our thoughts, perceptions and values. We need a mutation of the very foundation of perception, the very source of response, the emergence of global ethics, and a new global order. We have to understand the mystery of life.

Hideki Yukawa, a Nobel laureate in physics, wrote: 'It seems as if present-day physicists have lost the gift of foresight inherited from their forerunners. ...abstraction cannot work by itself, but has to be accompanied by intuition.'¹ He quoted the words of Max Born, 'Clever, rational ways of thinking are not enough. The danger of

1. Hideki Yukawa, *Creativity and Intuition*, (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1973), pp. 10–11.[Hereafter *Creativity*].

mass slaughter... can only be overcome by moral conviction, by a determination to replace national prides and prejudices with human love.² He recognized that science is part of human relations and that modern scientific work involves him and other scientists with society to an even greater extent than other people. It appears that scientists will have to explore ways and means: (1) to regenerate or rejuvenate the human mind, (2) to enable man to shift from reason to intuition and (3) to establish more harmonious relationship between man and man, man and animal kingdom, and man and his environment.

Science is the search for truth. A selfless, unfaltering devotion to truth and the use of knowledge for man's uplift are the ideals before a scientist. Truth is what all earnest scientists seek. The aim of science is to study nature and human experience objectively. Objectivity and precision, in respect of both thought and its verbal formulation, are two important characteristics of the scientific method.

But what is truth? What is true knowledge? Are there objective criteria for ascertaining truth? What is the significance of mathematical or scientific truth? Does there exist an ethical truth separate from the mathematical or scientific truth? Is not the pursuit of science itself a moral commitment, an ethical truth, not derivable directly from science? Are not scientific truths and ethical truths complementary? Is there any form of truth which is absolute or are all truths relative?

This article proposes to explore science and truth, to investigate the relationship between life and truth, the relevance of truth for different frames of reference of the mind-brain system. It presents parallels between psychosocial evolution and spiritual evolution. It also discusses life and death, love and truth, truth and lie, and absolute Truth.

The Psychological State of Mind

The challenges in the world outside—a rising wave of violence and crime, pollution and other environmental imbalances, a crisis in health care, increasing and staggering levels of poverty, hunger and malnutrition—are all different facets of inner crisis, and this crisis is essentially a crisis of perception. The conditioned human psyche, or the psychological state of mind, or the relative frame of reference of the mind spectrum, constructs successive time-space-causation matrices. The construct of the mind is at the immanent potential and it is divorced from the ultimate and achievable level. It represents the relative field of consciousness as opposed to the transcendent field of Consciousness.

Albert Einstein wrote in 1938:

Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world.... He (conditioned mind) will never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism and he cannot even imagine the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison.³

Einstein also said, 'Relative truth can be achieved by the process of reasoning.' The successive consciousness, which manifest at the mental plane construct concepts at the most and do not have the capacity to compare such concepts with the Reality. The concepts are always partial, relative and limited. And where there is any limitation, there is a catastrophic conflict.

The content of successive consciousness is our reactions, our beliefs, our faith, our prejudices, our fears and violence, and so on. It is the past memory or the cultural belief structure. We share the consciousness of all humanity, though the pattern may vary. The whole of mankind shares the dy-

3. Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (Fontana: Collins, 1982), p. 35. [Hereafter *Wu Li Masters*].

namics of successive consciousness—pleasure and pain.

A Critique on Human Psyche

Our ordinary language takes its images from the world of the senses. The atomic or the subatomic world deals with non-sensory experience, so verbal models or symbols are not adequate to describe the atomic/subatomic world. Science, in this sense, though relying on sense data, transcends our sensory imagination. From this point on it could no longer rely with absolute certainty on logic and commonsense. Werner Heisenberg wrote, 'Every word or concept, clear as it may seem to be, has only a limited range of applicability.'⁴ He added, 'The problems of language here are really serious. We wish to speak in some way about the structure of the atoms.... But we cannot speak about atoms in ordinary language.'⁵

We now explore the word 'psyche' in reference to human beings used in verbal communication, emphasizing the paradoxes. In the relative frame of reference, human psyche (with a lower case 'p') implies a construct of cultural belief structure and the thought-time dynamics. The perception is invariably mutilated or distorted. So the human psyche is engaged in a false process, or in a distorted perception. The psyche is a transducer; it converts the psychic energy to physical energy and stores this as frequency and amplitude information. The psyche is not a frequency analyser but a frequency transformer as there is exchange of energy between the subject and the object. The cultural belief structure or content of consciousness is an impurity; so it is limited and constructs contradictions and conflicts.

The conditioned mind-brain system is engaged in constructing a synthetic world which is a false process. A false process is defined as one which works in opposition to the laws of nature, and which is always dualistic. The false has its own opposite. A true process represents the dynamics of the Reality, the total Consciousness, and is in conformity with the laws of nature. It is in communion with nature. The conditioned mind-brain system does not have the capacity to perceive the truth and thrives by perpetuating the false process.

In the non-dual frame of reference of the Mind, the Psyche (with upper case 'P') perceives the Wholeness, the original (Absolute). The Psyche represents the pure brain bathed by unconditioned energy. In this frame of reference the psychic world (man-made social cosmos) instantaneously collapses, or the psychic barrier is transcended. The brain achieves this elevation in perception by purifying itself through the elimination of attachment to the limited sense-world and cultivation of a passion for truth for its own sake. Bohm wrote, 'The ultimate perception does not originate in the brain or any material structure, although a material structure is necessary to manifest it. The subtle mechanism of knowing the truth does not originate in the brain.'⁶

Karl Pribram and David Bohm, independently, gave a new perspective on Reality. In Karl Pribram's words:

Our brains mathematically construct 'concrete' reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension (timelessness), a realm of meaningful, patterned primary reality that transcends time and space. The brain is a hologram, interpreting a holographic universe.⁷

This accounts for precognition, psychokinesis, healing. He added, 'If these events emerge from frequencies transcending time

4. Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 125.

5. Ibid., pp. 178–79.

6. *Wu Li Masters*, p. 327.

7. Karl Pribram, *The Holographic Paradigm*, Shambhala, 1982, pp. 5–7.

and space, they don't have to be transmitted. They are potentially simultaneous and everywhere.'

We change the word 'psyche' to 'Psyche' in the words of Jung, Marie-Louise von Franz and Stanislav Grof in the light of the above discussion. Jung wrote, 'The psyche (Psyche) would have no dimension in space and time at all.' Jung's disciple Marie-Louise von Franz concurs, 'The psyche (Psyche) is eternal and everywhere; when something that touches it happens at one point, it has happened at all points simultaneously.' Stanislav Grof voiced, 'Modern consciousness research reveals that our psyches (Psyche) have no real and absolute boundaries; on the contrary, we are part of an infinite field of consciousness that encompasses all there is—beyond space-time and into realities we have yet to explore.'⁸ This suggests a new dimension of Psyche which is timelessness. Man lives simultaneously in two fields: the man-made social cosmos, and that which is untouched by man (unconditioned energy field which is always timeless). Man has to learn to live in the timeless with the awareness of timelessness, and handle time as a symbol that man has created. One has to live in the field of the unconditioned energy, and use the conditioned field (thought, word, language) without interfering in the flow of thought, and that gives the grip over the particular and have the awareness of the whole.

Unlike the psyche, the Psyche is not a transducer because it does not convert the psychic energy into physical energy; so there is no storing of perception. Again, unlike the psyche, Psyche is a true frequency analyser and it gives birth to perception of the truth which bestows intuition. It makes a new perception every moment and this perception is of the Wholeness.

Truth and Planetary Consciousness

Truth is not different from Love. Love is experienced in that state of mind or frame of reference of the mind spectrum in which the thought process has ceased to exist. Truth expresses itself when the thought-time or the past remembrances are transcended; truth expresses itself in the domain of the timeless. To experience Truth or Love, one's past memories have to die and one has to live in the present. Truth cannot be expressed by the mind or in words. It has to be lived. And one who is wholly consecrated to Truth, who wants to live in Truth, serve Truth, finds that Truth expresses itself in the pure mind. So it is self-referral; it (Truth) reveals Itself (Truth) to Itself (pure mind). Truth is something living, vibrant, expressing itself at each moment. Truth is in everyone; It is not far, It is not near; for It is eternally everywhere.

Every individual must make the effort to ascend to Truth. When the symbolic-dualistic frame makes a quantum jump to the non-dual frame of reference of the mind spectrum, one attains the capacity to perceive the Wholeness. The Planetary Consciousness or Truth Consciousness self-expresses Itself then. Sri Aurobindo calls the non-dual frame, the Supermind. In the non-dual frame, there is no sense of comparison, no reward or punishment, no achievement, no thinking; so the brain is quiet—not made quiet by will, by intention, or by conclusion. The secret of the climb to Truth is to remain self-aware at every instant. It does not require effort but *grace* of nature that descends when one is truly relaxed. The relaxed attention is the key to the dissolution of sorrow or any other state we may be in, for, when there is attention, there is no conflict. In principle this is exposing the conditioned thought-time to the unconditioned energy, which leads to the disintegration of the thought structure. The true healer, therefore, is the unconditioned energy, the timeless dimension of life, the non-dual reference of

8. Ervin Laszlo, *Promoting Peace Through Planetary Consciousness*, 1955.

the mind spectrum. This is the secret of the mutation of the human psyche. The answer to the human paradox of continuance of life on this planet is to make a quantum jump from the psychosocial evolutionary process to the spiritual evolutionary process and live in the light of that enlightened understanding.

Mathematical Truths

D.S. Kothari discussed that mathematical truths as regards their validity or 'reality' are completely independent of experience.⁹ The new theorems, unless trivial, are of course first 'discovered' and then proved. Discovery is an inspired intuition, a flash of insight. A rational account of a discovery, the proof, follows and does not precede the discovery.

Life and Death

The quantum jump from psychosocial evolution to spiritual evolution is to jettison the bondage of thought-time, the limitations of the sense-world, and pain and suffering, and to imbibe freedom, peace and bliss. Freedom implies that man is to be detached from the psychological debris that he has with care put together during a long period of evolution down the corridors of history. All psychological memories and imbalances have to be totally abandoned; that is what it means to die. It implies no attachments, no gods, no future, no past. The art of living is that every moment one dies to the past, does not look forward to the future and lives in the present. So each moment is a new moment. Each moment one is dying and incarnating.

The I-ness, the ego, the 'I' or 'me' is a concept through which the human race has been operating for uncountable aeons. It has not got any objective reality, so it is a ficti-

tious entity.

The human brain cannot perceive death, because perception of death with the help of a word, thought or concept is not possible. It is an event through which one passes. Irreversible termination of all physical emotions and ending of thought-time is psychological death. Psychological death takes place when one ascends to the timeless field and perceives the Wholeness, the Truth.

Love is not a concept, not an idea, not a thought. It is not within the realm of causation. It is not a part of human knowledge or inheritance. The unconditioned cessation of thought processes is the prerequisite for the emergence of Love. The serene silence one experiences in the non-dual frame of reference of the mind spectrum is where Love blossoms.

Love and death go together. In physical death one becomes free, unattached; nothing accompanies one after death. And Love says: be free from the psychological memory which implies ending of thought-time. Love implies that one lives in the enormous quantum energy potential of the unconditioned energy, the planetary Consciousness. Love self-expresses itself in a non-dual frame of the mind spectrum. Outstanding western thinkers like Bertrand Russell and Sorokin have warned that modern civilization cannot survive unless it is inspired by ethical and spiritual values of which Love is the foremost.

Invention and Discovery

Invention, which means to modify the known with the help of the known, is based on past knowledge. Knowledge is a movement under limitation; so invention is also limited. Creativity, however, is not born of knowledge or past experience and so does not involve time. When the mind is attentive, the Absolute energy bathes the brain cells and intuition results. Learning in the true sense takes place in the state of atten-

9. D.S. Kothari, Anniversary Address at the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, 1975.

tion. Intuition is fundamental while logic or intellect is a derivative. Intuition happens in the timeless domain and flows into creativity.

In the modern world, there is technical advancement at an accelerated pace, but this is neither accompanied by inward growth nor by psychological flowering. This has resulted in an imbalance. We have yet to know how to live together in cooperation and harmony. We have cultivated the intellect and are yet to cultivate the heart. We are superficial, intellectually brilliant, capable of great inventions, producing the most destructive means for liquidating each other, creating more and more dissension amongst ourselves. We create a world that is utterly confused and miserable, and our interpersonal relations are flimsy and superficial. What we need now is an extraordinary inward richness and that richness can only come when we understand Truth, when we are capable of perceiving Truth. There can be no transformation in the external world without a transformation in the inner world. The basic need is to transform the human psyche. This transformation means to see the false as false and the true as true. Only Truth can liberate the mind from its own preconditioned state. It is Truth that liberates, not your striving to be free.

Parallels between Successive Consciousness and Planetary Consciousness

The brain is a non-linear product of a non-linear evolution on the planet. The relative frame of reference of the mind spectrum is an open system, open to environment and linked to it by very dense feedback loops influenced by its environment; but the total dynamics is governed by successive consciousness (psychosocial evolution). The mind-brain system is in far-from-equilibrium conditions as very small perturbations or fluctuations (known as psychological hurts) can become amplified into gigantic waves of violence, anger, envy, and so on.

The future evolutionary trajectory is planetary Consciousness (spiritual evolution).

We explore parallels between the dimensions of successive consciousness and planetary Consciousness, and the salient conclusions are summarized in Table I (see next page).

Truth and Lie

The conditioned mind-brain system projects successive time-space-matrices, which suggest that the subject and the object are continuities of change. The experience at each moment is also a continuity of change. This suggests that experience is not repeatable. The experience is verbalized and one can communicate it. There may be a desire for its repetition, for its sensation, but once you have had an experience, it is over, it cannot be repeated. What can be repeated is the sensation and the corresponding word that gives life to that sensation. The conditioned mind-brain system is engaged in successive false processes, and there is repetition of the false processes. The false process is basically moving all the time in the prison-house of thought and memory. There is no freedom there. If one observes the movements of thought, then one sees the false as the false, and the false drops away.

Let us take a sentence from the scripture: 'Love your neighbour', or 'Do not be greedy'. This may be true for one who originally perceived that thought and penned it, but it is a concept or an ideal so far as you are concerned. So the truth of another, merely through verbal repetition, does not become the truth or the reality. On the contrary, repetition prevents reality. Merely repeating certain ideas is not reality.

If one is aware of oneself at every moment, then thought-time goes to abeyance, and the Truth self-reveals itself. This is called understanding of life directly. Understanding bestows the Truth. To be able to create or discover needs the bathing of the brain with the unconditioned energy. In

Truth there is freedom. Freedom bestows innocence and humility. In innocence there is Love, and in humility there is intelligence. If the Truth is verbalized, it becomes false. This brings in contradiction and one becomes unbalanced. But if one sees the contradiction, then the contradiction ends, and one sees the Truth.

The very desire to be something, to become something, to achieve and possess something, brings in contradiction. Contradiction ceases when one sees 'what is' and not 'what should be'. To be aware of what is, the fact, brings about a radical transformation or mutation of the human psyche.

Perception is always in the present. It is a complete cessation of psychological time. Each moment of perception is a complete miniature realization. This perception destroys the conditioning of the mind. Truth is a matter of perception. Truth cannot be preached because It is beyond words, It is not a mere formula. It can be lived because

It is living.

Action is pure perception, the fact; interaction is energy transduction between the fact and the non-fact, and this results in mutilated perception. The symbolic-dualistic frame is engaged in interaction, and non-dual frame of the mind spectrum is engaged in action.

Truth is not the opposite of a lie. That which has an opposite is not Truth. The opposite contains its own opposite, therefore it is not Truth. To understand this position deeply, one must be aware of all the contradictions in which one lives. One can understand the contradiction when one is aware of it, aware without any condemnation or justification—merely looking at it. One has to learn to be aware of one's own inward activities, to watch what one is thinking without interfering with the flow of thought. It is self-acquaintance with the dynamics of one's own mind-brain system. When one begins to see that which is false,

Table I. Successive consciousness versus Planetary Consciousness

Item	Successive consciousness	Planetary Consciousness
a)	The mind-brain system is open to the environments and closed to the Absolute, and this enhances the entropy of the system. We live in a world of increasing entropy, increasing disorder, increasing psychological imbalances and tend to approach the dangerous state of maximum entropy, which is death. It deals with processes which are false.	It leads to decrease of entropy, which is self-relaxation. It leads to equipoised, balanced, quiet, still mind. A quiet mind bestows understanding, which leads to a perception of the Truth. Only the Truth can liberate the mind from its own ideation, own psychological imbalances.
b)	It leads to enhancing violence, fear, anger, acquisitiveness, and so on. It adds to psychological debris, lowering of sensitivity and self-annihilation.	It leads to ending violence, fear, and anger, and ushers in a new era of freedom, peace and bliss. It leads to mutation of the human psyche. This is the key to progress.
c)	The psyche acts as a transducer, it converts the psychic energy and stores this as frequency and amplitude information. The storing is cumulative.	The Psyche is not a transducer because it does not convert the psychic energy into physical energy, so there is no storage of the perception. It is from moment to moment.
d)	The psyche is not a frequency analyser but a frequency transformer, so there is exchange of energy between the subject and the object.	The Psyche is a true frequency analyser, It gives birth to perception of the Truth which bestows intuition.
e)	Self-interactive dynamics of consciousness.	Self-referral state of Consciousness.
f)	It fragments life, brings confusion and contradiction, which breed pain, misery and travails.	It perceives wholeness of life with Its intelligence, It expresses Itself as Love and Compassion with Its sensitivity.

then there is the beginning of awareness, of intelligence. One has to be a light to oneself and it is one of the most difficult things in life.

Buddha says, 'Self is, Truth is. Where self is, Truth is not. Where Truth is, self is not'. And once 'self' dissolves, we have true freedom—free from the weight of time, free from the burden of the past, free from the action of will, free from all our suffering. This freedom alone will lead to a silent mind, a mind that no longer chatters, a mind that is deep and tranquil, a mind that does not live in the knowledge of yesterdays and to-morrows, a mind that lives in the *now*, a mind that does not live in the knowledge of the *now* but in the feeling of *now*. Such a mind (Mind) is the source of all creativity and spontaneity.

Pseudo-Reality, Fact, Truth, Absolute Truth

An understanding of all the coordinates of mind-brain system leads to a journey from pseudo-reality to fact, to truth, to absolute truth. This division is merely an exegetical convenience, a device to make the complex story of hierarchical or heterarchical expressions of the spectrum of consciousness a little easier to tell.

Pseudo-Reality: The conditioned mind-brain system constructs the external world whose dimensions are in time-space-causation; it gathers experience and knowledge which are stored as frequency and amplitude information; the memory has also characteristics of inheritance. So this outgoing and ingoing movements of conditioned energy has a framework of total human experience and knowledge. Man has learnt to live in a synthetic world, which is a construct of the mind; so life has been equated with the movement of the conditioned energy. The synthetic world is a world of concepts, ideas; the mind is engaged basically in a false process, so this is called pseudo-reality.

The content of the consciousness, or the

conditioned brain, scatters the Fundamental Vibration, splits the mind into subject and object which causes limitation and conflict. This reduces the absolute rest frame to many relative frames of references of the mind spectrum, which do not have the capacity to perceive the superconductive Fundamental Vibration of the Universal Mind but have the capacity to construct pseudo-reality.

Fact: If one is aware of the limitations and dynamics of the conditioned energy, or in other words, one has first-hand personal acquaintance with the movement of the conditioned energy, then the pseudo-subject goes to abeyance and awareness or attentiveness takes over as the subject. The attentiveness transforms the foundation of perception and the very source of response. The attentivity leads to understanding the nature, limitations and the dynamics of the conditioned mind; when there is no more fascination of the acquisition tendency, no more fascination with the activity of knowing, no more obsession of gathering knowledge and experiencing, then there is relaxation. Relaxation implies that thought-time goes to abeyance. The attentiveness sees instantly, it sees the fact. The fact is defined as pure perception. The state of attentiveness is a state of great depth, stillness in which there is no conflict, no contradiction. The state of attentiveness implies a quantum jump from symbolic-dualistic frame to non-dual frame of reference of the mind spectrum. The non-dual frame perceives the fact.

Truth: If the state of attentiveness is sustained for a long chronological time, then the fact is left alone, so the fact itself is the operator, not you operating on the fact. Let the fact live. When the fact is left alone completely, it blossoms instantly. It wipes away all other factors. When the fact blossoms, it goes to abeyance, and the frame has the awareness of the truth. Truth flows when the subject of cognizance is non-reactional

awareness. The scattered vibrations of the successive consciousness go to abeyance and there is perception of the Fundamental Vibration, of the simultaneous Consciousness.

The critical inquiring spirit, along with the detachment, objectivity, precision and the challenge of verification leads to the gateway of truth. The objective truth bestows human values or global ethic. The global ethic transcends mere personal subjective fancies and satisfactions, so it is independent of the knowing person. The global ethic emerges out of the depths of the Universal Consciousness at a certain stage of human evolution where measure of the environment goes to abeyance.

The truth is defined as perception of the innermost Self, the expression of the Universal Consciousness, or Active Reality.

Absolute Truth: If one lives in the state of awareness, or is in communion with the Active Reality, then the Active Reality itself makes another quantum jump to Passive Reality. It is defined as Passive Reality $\Rightarrow$ Active Reality. The Fundamental Vibration of the simultaneous Consciousness goes to abeyance and there is Silence. In Indian tradition, the Passive Reality $\Rightarrow$ Active Reality is called *Brahman*. We may call the state of pure Awareness or early stages of meditation as the *Atman*. The *Atman* is the personal Self, the *Brahman* is the omnipresent, all-comprehending eternal Self; and both are the same (*Atman* = *Brahman*). Schrodinger stated that 'every conscious mind (Mind) that has ever said or felt 'I' (Self) am the person, if any, who controls the motion of the atoms'¹⁰, controls the universe, according to the Laws of Nature. The planetary Consciousness is equated to the *Atman* of the Vedanta. *Brahman* is called the absolute

Truth. The 'one Self of all' or the Absolute Truth is the divine immortal dimension of man. The awareness of the Wholeness is the consummation of Intelligence. This is the consummation of human growth. This is the emergence of the new human being. This only is the social, psychological, and even the political revolution.

Concluding Comments

Mankind is caught in a great delusion. It thinks it can solve its problems through legislation, through political and social reform, through scientific and technological progress, through greater knowledge, greater wealth, greater power and greater control. It may solve some problems with all these; but those are all trivial problems and temporary cures. We shall go on creating new problems on the one hand and trying to solve them on the other to maintain the illusion of 'progress'. And not much time is left now, because the conditioning is leading mankind to insanity, irrationality, and annihilation.

The divisions in society are the result of psychological conflicts within the individual; so the individual is conditioned by society and is neither unique nor whole, but is fragmented and in conflict. The action of relationship between you and another, between you and me, is 'society'. Since society is always static and the individual is dynamic, it is a constant inward revolution, a creative psychological transformation that can bring about a sane and healthy society.

The answer to human paradox is embedded in mutation of the human psyche which leads to radical transformation of the foundations of perception and the source of response. It is first-hand personal acquaintance of the movement of the conditioned energy (successive consciousness) that opens the door to the unconditioned energy (planetary Consciousness), or in other words, a quantum jump from fragmentary perception to the perception of the Whole-

10. Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life? and Mind and Matter* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 93.

ness.

The understanding of the limitations and dynamics of mind-brain system is the beginning of the awareness of the Whole. The understanding of the nature of bondage is the beginning of the awareness of one's freedom. And it is only the human being living in the fact of freedom who has the

capacity to create a new society, a new world order. The new world order banishes all pain, misery and sorrow, and ushers in a new era where every human being revels in freedom, peace and bliss. In this exploration are embedded the seeds of human survival. □

Swami Brahmananda

(Continued from page 678)

of this petty work, have verbally abused you and given you pain. I am not fit to live with you. I shall go away to the Himalayas and live in solitude.' Brahmananda, also upset, said: 'Don't say that. Your scolding is a blessing. How can you leave us? You are our leader. How shall we function without you?' Gradually both of them calmed down.

One day after lunch while Swamiji was resting at Belur Math, he asked his disciple Sharat Chakrabarty to give him a little massage. Sharat was happy for the opportunity to serve his guru; but Swamiji didn't like his massage because, out of respect, Sharat massaged him gently. Swamiji asked him to call Brahmananda, who had just then gone to rest. When Brahmananda arrived, Swamiji said: 'Raja, I don't feel good today. I asked this Bangal to give me a massage, but he did not do it well. So I have called you.' Immediately Maharaj began to massage Swamiji vigorously, like an expert, and continued for a couple of hours. When the exhausted Brahmananda returned to his room, Sharat went to him and said: 'Maharaj, I have come to you to resolve my confusion. I have heard that you are the spiritual son of the Master, and I have seen how much Swamiji respects you. I don't understand why Swamiji asked you to give him a massage.' At this Brahmananda said: 'What do you say?

Don't you know he is the Lord Shiva Himself!'

After fulfilling his mission, Vivekananda prepared to depart from this world by relinquishing his responsibilities, mainly to Brahmananda and Saradananda. When Sister Nivedita asked for some advice about her school, Vivekananda wrote her back on 12 February 1902: 'In a previous letter, I have written you what little I had to suggest.... I recommend you none — not one — except Brahmananda. That 'Old Man's' [Sri Ramakrishna's] judgements never failed — mine always do. If you have to ask my advice or to get anybody to do your business, Brahmananda is the only one I recommend, none else, none else; with this my conscience is clear.'

Vivekananda had tremendous faith in Brahmananda's loyalty. He would say: 'Others may desert me. But Raja will stand by me till the last.' Vivekananda passed away on 4 July 1902. Brahmananda cried like a child over his body. When Saradananda lifted him up, Brahmananda said: 'It is as if the whole Himalayan Mountains have disappeared from before my eyes!'

(to be continued)

Reviews and Notices

IN THE SERVICE OF GOD AND MAN: THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN MAURITIUS: *Dr. L.P. Ramyeed; edited by Swami Kirtidananda and Kevin Shillington; publ. Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, Moka, Mauritius; Souvenir 1995; pp. 111 + advertisements; Rs. 15 + Rs. 3/-.*

This souvenir makes an excellent study of the growth of the Ramakrishna Mission in Mauritius from its establishment in 1939 by Swami Ghanananda.

Chapter I provides a backdrop to the subject taking in its gamut such aspects as the emergence of Swami Vivekananda as a world teacher and his contribution to the Indian renaissance, the cardinal principles and activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and the growth of the Mission centres outside India. This is followed by a profile of Mauritius in historical, geographical, political, economic and cultural terms and the role of Indian immigrants in its development.

Chapter III lucidly describes the social and cultural milieu in which the Ramakrishna Mission was founded in Mauritius. Many factors and events of historical merit have been mentioned in this context: visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Mauritius in 1901, work of Manilal Doctor for the uplift of Indo-Mauritian community, establishment of such religious and cultural organizations as the Arya Sabha and the Hindi Pracharini Sabha, public debates between the exponents of Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharma over caste, idolatry, *karma kanda*, etc., craze for Indian sacred literature like *Ramacharitamanas*, role of Kunwar Maharaj Singh in promoting Hindustani language and Indian values and that of Dr. Maurice Cure in founding the Mauritius Labour Party, and, finally, the formation of Indian Cultural Association (1936) which may well be said to be the precursor to the Ramakrishna Mission in Mauritius.

When the proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries and the rising tide of materialism were fast eroding Indian cultural and social values, a group of enlightened Tamilians in Mauritius led by Mootoomaren Sangeelee contacted John de Lingen Lilbern—a British protagonist of Hinduism—for his help and advice. He, in turn, suggested to them to seek the assistance of the Ramakrishna Mission, Calcutta, in this regard.

Chapter IV beautifully describes how the ar-

rival of Swami Ghanananda (1939–1946) in Mauritius and the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission there ushered in a period of cultural resurgence.

Swami Ghanananda's illuminating sermons, philanthropic work, inspired writings, educational and cultural activities and cyclone-relief operation endeared him to many including the leaders of other religious organizations, some of whom honoured him publicly. He opened a Hindi school and an orphanage and propelled the establishment of the Sarada Society and the Ramayana Association. He purchased by way of donations a huge mansion known as 'Campagne Armonville' in Vacoas which now forms the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission in Mauritius. The mansion stood on a land 5 acres 78 perches in extent. It comprised of one big wooden building and a smaller wooden out-house behind. In 1973, Swami Tattwabodhananda started constructing a temple on this property which was completed by Swami Aparananda in 1976.

Swami Nihareyananda (January 1947 to December 1950) consolidated the work of the Mission after Swami Ghanananda (Chapter V). He was an erudite scholar, an eloquent speaker and a great organizer. Besides holding religious classes, lectures and meetings, he provided solid economic footing to the organization by purchasing sugarcane land at St. Julien D' Hotman and by getting 36 acres of crown land for tea plantation on 99 years lease. During his term, the Mission headquarters at Vacoas and the sub-centre in St. Julien D' Hotman remained very active.

Swami Nihareyananda's successor, Swami Kritananda, earlier Brahmachari Avinashichaitanya (1951–1971) was kindhearted and an intelligent person but it took him long to gain acceptability. He had a good voice and rendered bhajans in lilting tunes; his satsangs were popular and his knowledge of the Vedanta superb. But his administrative acumen was often questioned. To begin with, he was assisted by a Board of Management to carry out new plans and projects. After about a decade, the Board became 'less active and less effective' because of the death of Sreenarain Jugdutt, a dynamic member. It was a time of 'progress and regress' and some of the projects conceived earlier were aborted. Swami Kritananda established a Ramakrishna College on the premises of an orphanage and a part-time Hindi school at 15 Cantons, Vacoas (Mission's

Headquarters).

Swami Kritananda was followed by Swami Tattwabodhananda (Chapter VII). His activities included the holding of Sunday Prayer meetings followed by a spiritual class, celebration of the birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, holding the first Durga Puja 'in an image' besides starting the construction of a magnificent temple. He was also given the honour of presiding over a religious ceremony in which a *kalash* of holy water brought from the Ganges was placed in the centre of the 'Pari-talab'. Since then it is called *Gangatalab*, 'the lake of the Ganga', by the Hindus in Mauritius.

In subsequent chapters the author delineates the work and achievements of Swamis who came after Swami Tattwabodhananda. They were Swamis Aparananda (July 1974 to August 1978), Sudarshananda (January 1976 to October 1979), Puranananda (4 February 1979 to 23 March 1979), Balaramananda (3 August 1979 to 29 June 1987) and Purnakamananda (6 January 1980 to 12 December 1980).

Swami Krishnarupananda, who holds charge of the Mission at present, is a dynamic spiritualist with great managerial qualities. Under his stewardship, the Mission has seen tremendous growth in all fields of activity.

The Souvenir has a useful set of three appendices. Appendix III is particularly useful as it provides short biographies of persons who have left an indelible mark on the history of Mauritius. Swami Kirtidananda's and Kevin Shillington's editing is excellent. Well produced, the book is a must for the historian and the devout. Even a casual reader would find it informative and interesting.

Dr. Satish K. Kapoor
Jalandhar City

ŚRĪJĪVOTTAMANUTIḤ with an Introduction by Dr. B.N.K. Sharma; by Pt. Ānandatīrthācārya; publ. Sri Hamsavahana Prakashanam, 1073 Anantashayana Galli, Belgaum, 590 002; 1994; pp. 42 + xii; Rs. 5/-.

The book consists of three major parts. The first part contains an Introduction by Dr. B.N.K. Sharma, the second part consists of 162 verses devoted to *Mukhyaprāṇa* which is taken as the 'the highest in the cadre of *jīvas*' and the last part is the Sanskrit commentary on these *Ślokas*.

In the Introduction Dr. Sharma has given an

account of the aims and objectives of the author for writing this book, the role of *Mukhyaprāṇa* in spiritual attainment etc. The primacy of this has been accepted in the Vedas, Upanishads, etc. and also in the works of Sri Madhvācārya. It has been accepted as prime 'among the gods next only to the Supreme Brahman'. It is very much interesting that the author has shown the exact *Mantras* or passages where this *Mukhyaprāṇa* is praised. The author has taken pains to give a list of the names of *Mukhyaprāṇa* like *Mātariśvā*, *Jātavedāḥ*, etc. The *Vāyu* is accepted as the base of worship and meditation so that one can attain the Supreme. After going through this introductory portion a reader will have a soothing experience as if he is enlightened by the grace of the author (both Dr. Sharma and Ānandatīrthācārya)—'Tatprasā dānurañjitaḥ' just as the authors are enlightened with the grace of *Mukhyaprāṇa* 'which is indispensable for getting the grace of the Lord'.

The supremacy of *Mukhyaprāṇa* is philosophically significant as it has become the medium or locus (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of Supreme Being. Even in Advaita Vedānta *Saguṇa Brahman* has been praised as a medium of attaining the world of *Nirguṇa Brahman*. The stories in the Upanishads are described only for the uplift of the minds of beginners so that they become eligible for the Supreme Knowledge. In the present context, the *Mukhyaprāṇa* plays the role of *Saguṇa Brahman* which can lead an individual to the world of *Nirguṇa Brahman*.

The second part contains 162 *ślokas* praising the grace of *Mukhyaprāṇa* and the Sanskrit commentaries on the same are found in the last part. In the *Ślokas* primarily the activities or Divine sports (*līlā*) of the *Mukhyaprāṇa* have been put forth in the metrical form. It describes Hanuman and Bhima as both of them are the sons of *Vāyu*. The author has beautifully described the activities of Hanuman who makes other rivers act as the Ganges (*Gaṅgī-yanti sadā sarvasaritaḥ*). It has got some inner significance which is beautifully described by the author in the commentary. To him, through the interference of *Vāyu*, the non-white objects become white. In the same way, through the grace of Hanuman, the son of *Vāyu*, all the rivers act like white (...*pavanasya kīrteḥ saṅghātataḥ aśuklā api padārthā śuklā varṇyate. Hanumantaḥ kīrteḥ saṅghātanāt sadā samastasarito gaṅgīyanti gaṅgevacaranti, śuklā bhuvantītyarthaḥ*, p. 19). In the *Śloka* 11, the *Mukhyaprāṇa* is described as *vajrasāyaka* which means the supreme of the five *prāṇavāyus* (*Sāyako mukhyaprāṇa eva. Pañcātmako maruta eva Vānāḥ* p. 21). This *Mukhyaprāṇa* is also described as *Jātavedāḥ* (*Śloka* 97) on account of the fact that it becomes the knower of all persons who have taken birth (*Jātasya sar-*

vasya veditāḥ). How can it be the knower? The author spontaneously quotes from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* in his support where *Mukhyaprāṇa* is called the knower of all by way of protecting our bodies—*Tanunapāt* (p. 32). In this way, many interesting points and philosophical thought may be found in the Ślokas and commentaries on them if they are carefully read or if thought upon.

The importance of *Mukhyaprāṇa* in the field of spiritual achievement is, no doubt, accepted in our tradition. It is the author's contribution to this field that he has put forth the Śāstric evidence in favour of its supremacy in his own way in a metrical form and it is done for the first time. It is also related to the philosophy of Madhva.

The title of the book, '*Śrī Jīvottamanutili*' (i.e. the praise of the Supreme *Prāṇa*), is very significant, which presupposes the author's deep thinking and devotion to the aspect.

It would have been better if Pt. Ānandatīrthācārya had given an introductory note (*bhūmika*) in Sanskrit for the easy understanding of the Sanskritists who would go through the Ślokas.

This is a pioneering work in this field written in Sanskrit language which is beautiful and forceful due to having *Prasāda* and *Ojoguṇa* (*Prasādaramyā Ojasvini*). I believe that scholars and researchers will get much material in it for their future research in the field of Indology, religion and philosophy.

Dr. Raghunath Ghosh
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THE BIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL
SIGNIFICANCE OF VEDIC MYTHOLOGY;
*Shri A.K. Bhattacharya; publ. Sanskrit
Pustak Bhandar, 38 Bidhan Sarani, Cal-
cutta 700 006; 1988; pp. 162, 200/-.*

Of the two main views on history, namely, the cyclic and the linear, Vedic culture adheres to the former one. History is supposed to have been shaped here by a cyclic evolutionary model, creation and destruction represented by the cosmic dance of the Archetype Shiva, following each other in an unending succession.

The present book tries to explain history in terms of evolution taken to be an interplay of racial subconscious that is guided by the innate difference in the neural connectivities of the brain created by the unique evolutionary history of each race. It subscribes to the theory that the head represents the cosmos. It explains Vedic mythol-

ogy in terms of biological and historical significance. Myth, here, is not a fable or fiction, it is connected with the history of the evolution of human race. Mircea Eleade, a great name in the field of mythic studies, treats myth as a true story which is very precious because it is sacred, exemplary and significant, it is a living force and supplies models for human behaviour and gives meaning and value to our daily life (cf. Eleade's *Myth and Reality*, 1963).

Vedic mythology closely adheres to the Purāṇic concept of time. The Purāṇic time cycle describes a Great Age (*Mahāyuga*) having four minor ages known as *Krita* (*Satya*), *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali*. A *Manvantara*, in the Purāṇic scheme, comprises seventy-one Great Age-cycles and a *Kalpa* cycle consists of fourteen *Manvantara* cycles. The four minor ages have their durations varying in the ratio 4:3:2:1. The *Kali* age is the shortest in duration and *Krita* the longest, four times as long as *Kali*. The total duration of one Great Age is approximately 50,000 years. Here it is interesting to note that shoe-clad human footprints or manmade artifacts have been discovered within fossilized layers of our earth, being millions of years old, varying from ten to twenty million years before our present time.

History, in this cyclic process, begins with *Krita Yuga* which has a very slow subjective flow of time. A consequence of the slowness of experienced time was the slow ageing of human beings. The Jewish patriarchs of the *Old Testament* had an average age of 400 years. In this Age, the Right Hemisphere of the brain dominated its counterpart. The Archi-cortex was powerful at that time whereas the Paleo-cortex was weak. The mind was, accordingly, focussed inwardly.

Reasoning is the attribute of the Left Neo-cortex. Pre-destination, on the other hand, is governed by the cyclic nature of evolution and the law of spiritual causality. The forces of pre-destination try to keep us satisfied with the phenomenal world, whereas the forces of free will choose the path of deliverance. That is why Reason (the Self) has been called the charioteer of the body (cf. *Kātha Upaniṣad*, I.3.iii).

With the dominance of the Neo-cortex, revelatory state begins. Myths are created now. They have their origin in the evolutionary history of animate creation and revealed in the state of Yogic trance. With the increase in the power of the Left Neo-cortex, the self-conscious mind becomes outwardly directed, directed towards sensory objects (represented by the Biblical Fall of man). The appearance of consciousness, nonetheless in its primal state, free from the shackles of matter, in the form of *Pitris* (Fathers) is, as per the Vedic mythology, the zenith of evolution. The

Pitris or Progenitors (Dirgha Tamas, for instance) evolved blind. They found light that lay in darkness and with effectual words begot the morning (cf. *Rg-Veda*, VII.76.4). And the seven fundamental metres (*Gāyatrī*, etc.) were revealed to them.

The *Pitris* (Aryans) migrated from Antarctica to South America over ice bridges about 100,000 years ago. South America was the Garden of Eden as described in the *Old Testament* where undivided proto-Caucasoid race lived before the Fall. The race had settled in the foothills of Andes. Subsequently, it divided into five sub-races, namely, Yadu (Nordoices), Turvasa (Turkic), Druhyu (Slavs); Anu (Semitics) and Puru (Aryans).

In the Indian branch of the Yadu tribe, Lord Krishna was born. The Achaeans and Dorian Greeks, Saxons, Persians, the Armenians and the invading Aryan tribes who put an end to the Indus civilization and settled in Sind belong to this sub-race. The Turvāsa tribes include the Turvasa who remained in the North-Central part of India, Assyrians, Turkish and Pathan tribes of Afghanistan. The Druhyu tribes include Ionian Greeks, Latians, Berbers and Tuaregs of North Africa, Proto-Caucasoid Red Indians of North America and the Slavs of Eastern Europe who came from South America via Atlantic. The Anu tribes include Akkadians and Babylonians, Phoenicians, Carthagians and the Semitic Arabs. The Puru tribes have three further sub-divisions. Tritsus or the Solar race comprised Ikshwakus, Janaks, Koshals who settled near Ayodhya and Mithila, the Vangavagadhas who settled in Sumatra, Java, Bali, etc. and the Gandharvas who migrated to Tibet, China and Japan. The Bharatas or the Lunar race included Kurus, Pāñchalas, Madras, etc. who settled in North-Central India and after the Great War moved to the South of Vindhya. The Northern Kurus moved out of India and are known variously as Pelasgians, Egyptians, Hittites, Lithuanians, Kurds, etc. The Bhrigus, the third branch of the Puru tribes include the Jamadagni Bhrigus (the Jews) and Anurva Bhrigus, the Indian branch who settled in Punjab.

Nahusha of the Vedic mythology is the Archetypal man (Adam). At the suggestion of his wife Śachī, he compelled the celestial sages to bear his litter. He was cursed by them and was born on this earth as a serpent. Its similarity with the Biblical legend of Adam and Eve cannot be a mere coincidence. According to Sāyana, 'Nahusha' means 'man' just like Adam.

The migration of these tribes from South America took place near the end of the *Krita* Age. In the wake of Satyavrata Manu's Flood (cf. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I.8.1), due to melting of South

Polar ice (beneath which a thick layer of vegetation and coal still survives), 30,000 years ago, the Aryans migrated from South America to India across the Pacific. It may be mentioned here that Noah's Flood, as found in the Biblical texts, took place in the Northern Hemisphere of the globe. It took place because of severe atmospheric precipitation and increase of sea-level due to the on-rush of sea water from the Southern Hemisphere.

The Flood events indicate the beginning of *Tretā* Age, when the Left Hemisphere became somewhat more powerful along with the Paleo-cortex. Left-handedness of man prevailed up to this time. This period lasted between 30,000 years and 15,000 years before the present time.

In *Dvāpara* Age (15,000 years to 5,000 years before our present time), both the Hemispheres (Right as well as the Left) were equally powerful. This signified the highest point in human creativity.

In the *Kali* Age (from 5,000 years before our present time to 2000 AD), the Left Hemisphere of the brain has taken over the dominance with a powerful Paleo-cortex. Yama is the Archetype representing the Paleo-cortex together with Varuṇa, the dispenser of justice.

At the end of the *Kali* Age, the Right Hemisphere will once more take over the dominance, probably through an evolutionary crisis (like a nuclear holocaust, or dooms-day, or, as predicted by Nostradamus) and a new Great Age will commence with a *Krita* period in the beginning and inward mind active over matter due to the dominance of the Right Hemisphere of the brain.

Why is the change from *Kali* Age to *Krita* Age abrupt and not gradual as is the case with the other transitions is not explained.

The book under review has a powerful thesis in the area of cosmology. It reminds us of paleontological studies of the French scholar Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who has made epoch-making researches into man's past and has also tackled the future of mankind at scientific, philosophical and theological levels. The work also suggests a convincing theory about the movement of the Aryans as against the popular theory of their coming to India from Central Asia. The author, here, goes beyond Tilak in tracing the dawn of the Vedic culture to much older times.

Prof. S.P. Dubey
Jabalpur

News and Reports

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Chennai: Report 1996-1997

The Home from its very humble beginnings in 1905 has grown into a big institution. In 1905, it had just five inmates. Today it is providing free board and lodging and educational facilities to 351 orphan and destitute boys. Apart from the Residential High School and the Technical Institute (Polytechnic), the Home runs a middle school at Malliankaranai in Uttiramerur Taluk, Chengai-Anna District, for which steps are afoot to upgrade as a High School and a Primary School in Mylapore.

The Home provides the best facilities to its inmates. It has a well-equipped library and a gymnasium. Considerable stress is laid on character building and cultivating self-reliance. For the benefit of the boys, lectures and cultural programmes are arranged regularly. Various festivals are celebrated on a grand scale and the children take an active part in them. Children are taken to various places of interest on excursions. The Home meets all its expenses from the generous contributions it receives from its well-wishers and ex-students. Despite the soaring prices, the Home has not diluted its standard. It hopes to carry on its activities with continued vigour in the future also, of course, with the sympathetic support of its friends, well-wishers and ex-students.

The Vedanta Society of Portland

The Vedanta Society of Portland, 1157 S.E. 55th Avenue, Portland, OR 97215, USA, has brought out a set of eleven tapes of the lectures of Swami Aseshanandaji Maharaj (a direct disciple of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi): (1) Holy Mother, (2) Steps to Illumination, (3) Three Great Blessings, (4) Katha Upanishad, (5) Raja Yoga, (6) Holy Company (evening readings), (7) Companion of Sri Krishna (Reminiscences of Swami Brahmananda), (8) Divine Life (Reminiscences of Swami Shivananda), (9) The Message of Swami Yogananda, (10) Divine Love (Reminiscences of Swami Premananda), and (11) A Knower of God (Reminiscences of Swami Vijnanananda). The tapes cost \$ 5.99 each or \$ 60 for the entire set and can be had from the Society. Also available from the Society at a cost of \$ 25 each, plus \$ 4 for postage and handling is, 'The Way of a Holy Man', a three-hour videotape of Swami Aseshanandaji's Memorial Service including candid photos of the Swami's long forty-five years of spiritual service in America.

Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamla Tal Report 1996-1997

Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamla Tal, founded by Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj in 1915 in the serene and sylvan surroundings of the Himalayas, is a fine retreat for meditation and contemplation.

The Ashrama has been rendering free medical services through its 10-bed hospital with an out-patient department and a dental unit.

The Ashrama has a small library having 2600 books, 20 periodicals and 3 newspapers.

Dairy, orchard and cultivation of land are carried on on a moderate scale.

Ramnam sankirtan is observed every full moon day. Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, and other auspicious occasions including Snan Yatra were observed.

During the year, 95 woollen blankets and 136 items of warm clothing were distributed among poor villagers and school children respectively.

Centenary Celebration of

The Ramakrishna Mission and

Swami Vivekananda's Return to India

The **Ramakrishna Mission at Mauritius** celebrated the Centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission with a variety of programmes for nine days. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius; Dr. V. Bunwaree, Finance Minister; Mr. Gian Nath, Minister for Arts and Culture; Mr. A. Ganoo, Minister for Housing and Land Development, and several other dignitaries participated in the function. Thousands of people attended the programmes.

The **Ramakrishna Math and Mission Ashrama at Malda** held a programme from 6 to 8 June which included public meetings, a youth convention, a group discussion and competitions in recitation and elocution. The **Ramakrishna Math at Pune** conducted special puja, homa and devotional music on 1 May. The **Ramakrishna Mission T.B. Sanatorium at Ranchi** held an assembly of devotees on 22 April in which some distinguished persons spoke on Swamiji's triumphant return from the West. The Centre also arranged a special puja, homa and a meeting on the significance of the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission on 1 May. The **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Morabadi, Ranchi**, held special puja, homa and a public meeting on 1 May. □